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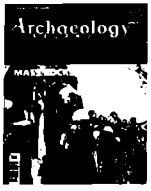
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MOSCOW DIALOGUES

By the Same Author

RELIGION AND COMMUNISM

RUSSIAN SOCIOLOGY

THE COMMUNIST ANSWER TO THE WORLD'S NEEDS

MOSCOW DIALOGUES

Discussions on Red Philosophy

by

JULIUS F. HECKER, PH.D.

With a Foreword by

JOHN MACMURRAY, M.C., M.A.
Grote Professor of the Philosophy of Mind and Logic, University of London

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To

Professor Harry F. Ward,

Friend and Comrade in the struggle for a social order where the strife of class and race shall be no more, and where truth, goodness and beauty shall be the share of all.

FOREWORD

THE opportunity to write a foreword to this book is one which I am glad to have. The time when all accounts of Bolshevik activities in Russia, however honest they might be, were received in a spirit of excitement which destroyed all possibility of sane judgment, is beginning to pass. The crisis in capitalist society has sobered our minds. A large number of people are ready and anxious to make the attempt to understand what has happened in Russia. These dialogues provide a unique opportunity to do so. Quite a number of books have recently appeared in English giving accounts of the Russian movement which are reasonably calm and unprejudiced. But they are all written by outsiders. Dr. Hecker is himself a teacher of philosophy in Moscow and a supporter of the revolutionary régime. At the same time he is not a propagandist in the ordinary sense. His mind is transparently honest, as any reader who is unprejudiced will see for himself. He wants to explain rather than to convince.

I had the pleasure of meeting Dr. Hecker at a summer school held by the Society of Friends in Birmingham during the past summer. He was engaged in collecting material for a course of lectures on recent religious movements in Europe to be delivered, at the request of one of the Institutes of the Communist Academy of Moscow. For this task he was eminently suited. Though Russian by birth he has spent a great part of his life in the United States, where he was engaged in social and literary work. He returned to Russia after the revolution as a member of a Famine Relief Mission, but owing to difficulties about his nationality he left the Mission and joined the regular educational service of the Soviet Union, in which he is still employed. During his short stay in England his simplicity and frankness, his obvious sincerity and humanity, endeared him to those who met him. It was usual to hear

people express their astonishment that a man with such religious sympathies and such a patently Christian character should support the Soviet system in Russia. These qualities of sympathy, simplicity and humanity, reveal themselves in his book and make it, in my opinion, by far the most satisfactory account of the theoretical aspect of the Russian revolution that we yet possess.

The theoretical aspect of Soviet activities is indeed of first-rate importance. It is not too much to say that it is quite impossible to understand the political, economic and social development of revolutionary Russia except by first understanding the philosophy which underlies it. Modern Russia is the first experiment that the world has seen, in planning a complete social life. It is not merely a planned economy that Russia is after. Its economic plan is merely part of a wider plan, and is itself dictated by a philosophical theory which covers every aspect of life. Communism stands or falls by its philosophy, and the leaders of Russia are perfectly aware of it. For them it is an elementary principle that a definite and consistent philosophical theory is the only basis on which a planned society such as they desire can be constructed. The exposition of the philosophy of the Bolsheviks is, therefore, not of academic interest only. Dr. Hecker has tried to expound it for ordinary intelligent people. In some of its phases this is a difficult task, since a revolutionary philosophy implies a revolution in traditional ways of thinking. But he has done his work well. The dialogue form in which he has cast his exposition, and which he handles with real literary skill, is a great advantage. And when one considers that he is expounding philosophical conceptions which are themselves in process of development, that the philosophy itself involves a new conception of the nature and function of philosophy, and that he is expounding it in a language that is not his mother tongue, we can only congratulate him on a remarkable achievement.

JOHN MACMURRAY.

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE,
LONDON, *January* 10, 1933.

PREFACE

FIFTEEN years have passed since the world was startled by the daring feat of Lenin and his followers. The old order was overthrown in Russia, a new social order with high aims and promises to make real the dreams of sages, prophets and revolutionaries of the past was introduced. In the face of furious world opposition and at the cost of terrific sacrifice the Bolsheviks have been forging ahead and are apparently succeeding. Whatever other criticism may be launched against them, I think no one can seriously accuse them of faithlessness to their aims. They have never wavered from their objective, to lay a firm economic and social foundation upon which true communism may develop. Indeed, they are frequently charged with stubborn and fanatic persistence in continuing their struggle against almost insurmountable difficulties, they are accused of ignoring the very fundamentals of human nature itself.

Without entering into a discussion of these charges it is evident that the much talked about pacific and mystic qualities of the " Russian soul " have proved a myth—a soapbubble pricked by the exigencies of the revolution. Conditions created by the cataclysmic upheavals following in the wake of the World War have produced in the new generation characteristics quite unlike those portrayed by Tolstoy, Turgeniev and Dostoievsky. To-day two-thirds of the population of the Soviet Union, i.e. over one hundred million belong to this new generation, being under twenty-five years of age. The old institutions of social control, the Church and the family, have had little to do with shaping their minds and ideals. The young people of the Soviet Union are moulded by the social environment in which party organizations, trade unions, the press and cultural institutions play an ever-increasing important part. There are the huge industrial and cultural enter-

prises of the State alongside the collectives and co-operatives which exert tremendous influence upon the growing minds.

Millions of words have been written in various languages to describe the new life and work of the people of the Soviet Union. Many other volumes are devoted to the activities of the Soviet government and the Communist party. If one reviews this immense literary output which has appeared since the Russian revolution and begins to classify it, one finds that it is chiefly given to telling what the communists have done or what they have left undone, how they have governed or how they have misgoverned, how they carry out their construction programme and how the people take it. The joys and sufferings of the masses have been recorded and frequently the cost of the revolution has been calculated in terms of human sorrow and property destroyed. Warning has been sounded to the proletariat of other countries, urging them against following the Russian example. But these books rarely if ever deal with the *whys* and *wherefores* of communist aims and activities. And yet the Russian scene cannot be really understood unless one has grasped the underlying philosophy of the communist movement.

For more than twenty years it has been my good fortune to study Russian social thought and philosophy. Some of the results of my studies were published in the 1915 edition of *Russian Sociology* It was clear to me then that Russia was rapidly moving toward revolutionary cataclysm. Throughout the nineteenth century Russian social philosophy was forging theories to justify revolution. The initiative of the Bolsheviks in launching the proletarian revolution was therefore no surprise to me. I understood that they were an historic necessity, a new social species, born out of the conflict of classes. Having stood the test of military intervention, blockade, and civil war they have proved their right to stay in the world, to aspire to become its dominant force.

The purpose of this book is to show in a readable form the development and present problems of communist philosophy. It is treated on a background of Russian social and political

history. The time-honoured dialogue form hardly needs an apology. I have chosen it, however, not in imitation of antique classical philosophy. It was rather suggested by actual experience during my many years of residence in Moscow, in the course of which numerous English-speaking friends from abroad have called upon me and discussed the problems of revolutionary philosophy. Taken together these visitors were not unlike the types participating in the dialogues of this book. " Socratov," the spokesman for communism, is presented as an orthodox communist philosopher ; qualified communists who have been kind enough to read my manuscript assure me that " Socratov " is fairly representative of their point of view.

The dialogues were written in a popular style with the desire to introduce this most important subject to the widest possible circle of readers, even to those who have not had special preparation in philosophy. The book, it is hoped, will give valuable information, so far not accessible in the English language, to the professional student as well. In preparing this study Russian sources were used almost exclusively. To those who have a reading knowledge of the Russian language, I recommend as good sources the communist philosophical monthly review, *Under the Banner of Marxism*, the by-weekly *Bolshevik*, and the *Messenger of the Communist Academy*. These three publications reflect best the trends of communist thought and give reviews of all important books and publications on philosophy which have appeared in the U.S.S.R. during the last decade. To those who do not read Russian I suggest a study of Marx and Engels, particularly Engels' *Anti-Duering* and *Feuerbach*, volume 13 of Lenin's collected works, and Stalin's essays on Leninism, some of which have appeared in English.

I gratefully acknowledge the generous service rendered by Milly Bennett Mitchell, who corrected the manuscript. Also to Professor John Macmurray for writing the Foreword and putting some finishing touches to my far from perfect dialogue.

J. F. HECKER.

Moscow, *October*, 1932.

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PROLOGUE

On a bright sunny day in the summer of 1931, I sat in the lobby of a Moscow hotel which is frequented by foreign tourists. I was musing over the people who leave their comfortable homes in California or Chicago, and travel to Moscow to get a glimpse of the Red Capital and to sense, if possible, that seemingly mysterious force which moves the greatest revolution in the experience of the human race.

Tourists from America and other countries who come to the U.S.S.R. are quite different from those one sees lounging in the hotels of Paris and Vienna. They are not pleasure seekers. They come here either to get the sensation which a revolutionary environment may give or they are thoughtful people seeking to understand the ideas which move this strange and, to many, fearful country.

They seldom come alone, usually in groups of more or less like-minded folk, led by some person who has had previous experience in travelling in the Soviet Union and who has an intelligent grasp on the situation in this country. On this July afternoon, I met such a group. The leader was known to me intimately. I listened to a conversation between a Russian philosopher and these Americans, who by their intelligence and differences of opinion may be considered representative of the American mind in respect to the vital problems which have been opened and focussed by the Russian revolution. I took notes of that and many subsequent conversations. The reproduction of these conversations forms the essence of the dialogues which follow.

DIALOGUE I

In which a group of American Intellectuals start a discussion on Philosophy with a Russian Communist

Enter a group of serious, middle-aged Americans led by a younger man.

THE LEADER : Now, sit down, gentlemen, and rest yourselves a little.

ONE OF THE GROUP (*falling into an easy chair*) : My ! but these Moscow cobble stones ! They jar your brains !

ANOTHER : Well, that's what your brains need ! Besides, it seems to be the mission of Moscow to jar our brains.

ANOTHER : Yes, we have been too long complacently sitting in our studies while the Bolsheviks were turning things upside down.

THE LEADER : Here, gentlemen, comes my Russian friend Socratov. He has lived in America and speaks English. He is something of a Communist Philosopher. Do you want to meet him ?

SEVERAL : Let's go for him.

ANOTHER : Does he know anything ?

THE LEADER : He might jar your brains more than the Moscow cobble stones.

Enter an unpretentious-looking man of about fifty, whose simple, white, Russian blouse and black leather belt distinguish him from the elegantly-dressed tourists.

THE LEADER : Hello, Comrade Socratov ! How is the world treating you ?

SOCRATOV : Nothing to complain of ! And how are you ? Back again to the Red Capital ? And this time not alone. (*Glances at the group of tourists.*)

THE LEADER: Yes, I am the blind leading the blind. I am conducting a group of distinguished Americans. Let me introduce them. Here is Mr. ——

SOCRATOV (*interrupting him*): Don't mention names to me. I don't remember them anyway. Tell me who they are and what their interests are.

THE LEADER: Here is our Professor. He was born in England but teaches in the U.S.A. Our group is proud of him. He knows so much and we use him as our encyclopaedia.

THE PROFESSOR (*bows slightly with a smile*): Our leader is very kind, but to tell the truth, although I have read many things about your country, I profess to know very little about it. I am here to learn. If you can help us, Mr. Socratov, we certainly shall appreciate it.

SOCRATOV: At your service. But don't call me "Mister." It sounds strange to a Bolshevik ear.

THE LEADER: And this (*pointing to a tall, ruddy, corpulent man of about fifty-five*) is our senator. True, he is an ex-senator, but we like to call him senator. It gives the group dignity. He's our guide in questions of high politics. He came with us to see how the Soviets work.

THE SENATOR (*reservedly*): Glad to meet you, sir. I would like to talk with you about a few things at your convenience.

SOCRATOV: Pleased to meet you, Senator.

THE LEADER: Here is the Shepherd of our Flock. His profession is not very popular in this country and we had some trouble in getting him a visa. Let me assure you, Comrade Socratov, he is not an ordinary parson. He is a humanist in his social philosophy and a modernist in theology. A species you do not have here and I must confess, his kind is not very numerous, nor very popular in the United States yet.

THE HUMANIST (*pressing Socratov's hand heartily*): I have always been anxious to meet a real intelligent Bolshevik who could give me his reasons for being one. That kind is about as rare in our country as humanist clergymen are in yours.

SOCRATOV (*warmly*): Don't think that humanists are alien to us. Our philosophy has great kinship with the greatest of

humanists, Ludwig Feuerbach, a teacher of Marx and Engels. He started them on the road leading to the ideas which have become the foundation of our communist philosophy.

THE HUMANIST: Is that so? Then I must get acquainted with Feuerbach, who is quite forgotten in our country.

THE LEADER: And here (*pointing to a thin, little man*) is our representative of political radicalism in America, who in a way speaks for the proletariat of our country. He is a distinguished Marxian scholar, but not a communist. You would probably call him a Reformist Menshevik.

THE REFORMIST: Our Leader is right. I am not a communist, neither am I a fanatic who cannot appreciate the good things you have accomplished. I hold that what is good for Russia is not necessarily good for America. While you needed a revolution, we only need reforms.

THE LEADER (*slightly alarmed*): Don't let's begin to talk about that now.

SOCRATOV (*good-naturedly*): Yes, it's a big subject. I hope you'll change your mind some day.

THE LEADER (*motioning to a jovial, well-dressed man*): And this is our Rotarian. (*The latter smiles, fumbling at his watch fob.*) You probably don't know what a rotarian is, but our friend will instruct you.

THE ROTARIAN: I might say, Mr. Socratov, that nobody knows everything or has everything, and therefore you share the good ideas you have with me and I share the good ones I have with you, and then we are rotarians.

SOCRATOV (*amused*): Well, that is very kind of you, but I am afraid that the good ideas I have to share may get you into trouble with your capitalist friends.

THE LEADER (*pointing to a man standing in the background, gravely listening*): And here is . . . is . . . now, what shall I call him? Well, he is a retired business man, a member of one of our great banking firms. He is sceptical about your social experiment, but I don't want to prejudice you against him.

THE BANKER (*nodding*): I am proud to call myself a capitalist.

Capitalism has still much to give to the world. A new capitalism is developing in the United States, of which you people probably know little.

SOCRATOV (*politely*) : We are ready to learn from anybody. I certainly shall appreciate hearing more about your new capitalism.

THE ROTARIAN : We are a bunch of Americans, as you see, who represent different interests, but we are all united by one flag which we love, and by one interest—to learn all we can from your country. Please tell us, how do you earn your living ?

SOCRATOV : I am a teacher of philosophy in one of our communist schools, but like every communist, I do many other things, besides.

THE PROFESSOR : I always say that we shall never be able to understand the movement here and its world-wide influence unless we understand its underlying philosophy. Unfortunately, our intellectuals in America have done too much specializing and while masters of minor details, they have lost the habit of synthesizing.

THE HUMANIST : Quite right, Professor. That is our humanist point of view. Our purpose is to make the pulpit a place where the people get an idea of the whole of life with its rich variety of interests, philosophy, art, science, economics and politics.

SOCRATOV : There is the constant danger of being distracted from the deeper things of life by the routine and drudgery of administrative and other duties. These, unfortunately, are rapidly increasing in our country, too, and a philosopher must be on guard lest he lose perspective in the kaleidoscopic changes of modern civilization. Our Party knows these dangers and does not sacrifice philosophy for the sake of expediency.

THE REFORMIST : Do you really think that there is any basic difference between your philosophy and that of any other philosophic school.

SOCRATOV (*animated*) : There certainly is. If you are a student of Marx, you probably will remember Marx's last thesis on

Feuerbach. "*Philosophers have only explained the world in different ways—the task is to change it.*" That is our definition of the purpose of philosophy. It is openly militant. Our purpose is not merely to explain a past and bygone age. True enough, we begin with the past to get a historical perspective and to discover the laws which govern life. But our real purpose is to make philosophy a method for the conscious direction of society and thus to emancipate mankind from the uncertainties which hitherto have been characteristic of society and which account for the chaos and anarchy of the capitalist world.

THE BANKER: You probably refer to the present depression. It makes for a temporary loss of public confidence and creates a certain amount of confusion.

SOCRATOV: I refer to that and to infinitely more.

THE SENATOR: Let me tell you, sir, our business men, along with the President, are quite aware of the seriousness of the situation. We are prepared to cope with it. Our President is just about to call a new conference to find the way out.

THE PROFESSOR: Pardon me, Senator, but I haven't much confidence in White House optimism. The situation is more serious than most people think. Let's not get away from this problem of philosophy. So you say, friend Socratov, that the communist is convinced that philosophy provides a method for realizing the vision of a conscious social guidance. Let me assure you, if this can actually be accomplished, it will be a social phenomenon of incomparable power. If once the masses are guided, not by fear or by superstitious beliefs in luck or providence, but by a definite philosophy of life which projects its goal and with the aid of science mobilizes the means for attaining these goals, free from traditions and unhampered by the selfish predatory interests of privileged classes—if that is your goal and if your philosophy is a method for attaining this, then I am with you.

SOCRATOV: That is our goal—a classless society and conscious self-direction armed by science and technique in a commonwealth where the ownership of property is socialised. Econo-

mics, government, and the social life, all are to be scientifically managed. Under these conditions we believe that the individual may fully express himself, unhampered by tradition and fear.

THE REFORMIST: Do you think that the socialist must adhere to a distinct philosophy of life and be intolerant of other philosophical theories. To my mind, that is not at all necessary. We American socialists share the opinion of Kautsky, who stands for freedom of conscience in questions of religion and philosophy. We have men in our ranks who are materialists and atheists, but perhaps many more who are idealists in philosophy, counting themselves followers of Kant, Schelling and Hegel. Many are agnostics and pragmatists, but not a few are openly religious and adhere to some mystic philosophy. *We* say that is their private affair. So long as they stand for democratic methods of combating capitalism and are amenable to party discipline, they can be members and leaders in the socialist movement.

SOCRATOV: I know your position, and the position of the Second International, together with its Kautskys, Adlers, Bauers, Macdonalds, DeMans, Thomas's and other leaders of western socialist thought. We consider it psuedo-Marxist and opportunist. I have with me the resolution of a recent philosophical conference which discussed contemporary problems of the Marx-Leninist Philosophy. (*Opens his brief case and searches among his papers.*) Here it is. Let me read you what our philosophers think about your philosophic position:

> "The theory of the Second International is a direct expression of its practise, openly defending the bourgeois social order, opposing the revolutionary movement of the working-class in the whole world; completely betraying the cause of socialism in the field of theory. The Second International is openly an enemy to Marxism. In rejecting dialectical materialism the theoreticians of the Second International, headed by Kautsky, corrupt Marxism and slander it. In the field of philosophy, as well as in

the province of social science and natural science, their opinions are entirely under the influence of bourgeois ideas."

Rather harsh language! but we Bolsheviks call a spade a spade.

THE REFORMIST: Never mind, I'm prepared to hear worse than that. I didn't come to Russia for compliments.

SOCRATOV: So much the better. Neither classical philosophy nor modern nor mystical philosophy fits the dynamic movement of communism. The revolution claims its own philosophy and I think we are developing it, not only from the heritage of Marx and Engels, but as a result of the synthetic growth of the world and particularly of our revolutionary development in the past century. Philosophy has always been an attempt to give rational justification either to the past or to the hoped-for future. Its origin may be found in the social experience of classes aspiring to self-consciousness and power. Thus philosophy is not the product of isolated intellectuals living in leisure, but is born in times of conflict. Communist revolutionary philosophy is just such an effort of rational justification and self-direction on the part of the awakened masses of struggling and groping humanity.

THE HUMANIST: I like this point of view. It reminds me of a similar idea expressed by our distinguished humanist philosopher, John Dewey. If I quote him right, he said in his book, *Reconstruction in Philosophy*, "philosophy originated, not from intellectual material but out of social and emotional material." The emotions and aspirations aroused by the revolutionary movement could not but result in an independent philosophy.

SOCRATOV: The point I wish to emphasize is that philosophy, like any other social phenomenon, should be studied against that historical and social background in which it has developed. We call this the materialist approach. You may call it the social-historical approach to philosophy. We call it materialistic in opposition to idealistic philosophy, which begins its reasoning with a *priori* premises neither historically established,

nor historically checked in the daily struggle of the masses. We call our philosophy Dialectic Materialism because its method is dialectic. That is, we study things, *not as fixed and permanent, but in a moving continuity of interpenetrating opposites*. While evolutionary, our philosophy presupposes *breaks* in the continuity of the past, that is, *it takes revolutionary breaks to be an integral part of the evolutionary process.*

THE PROFESSOR: Isn't your dialectics directly related to Hegelian logic? But Hegel used his dialectics to justify the *status quo* of the Prussian State and the Protestant Orthodoxy, which you are turning to the justification of revolution.

SOCRATOV: We are conscious of our relation to the classical philosophy of Germany and are proud to trace our origin not only to Kant, Fichte and Hegel, but to the English and French materialists and through them to the greatest mind of modern philosophy, Baruch Spinoza. All these have been synthetically and materialistically revaluated in the work of Marx, Engels and Lenin. Nevertheless, to grasp our philosophy in its relation to actual life, you must study it on the background of our revolutionary history.

(*Enter a young man with the badge of a tourist guide. He whispers into the ear of the leader.*)

THE LEADER: Pardon me, Comrade Socratov, our interpreter says that an appointment has been made for us to visit the Revolutionary Museum. Quite appropriate to follow up your idea that revolutionary philosophy should be studied upon its historical background! As I recall it, the Museum traces the background of the Russian revolution from its very beginnings.

SOCRATOV: You must not fail to visit the Museum. It gives concrete expression to many of the things which I could not express in words.

THE HUMANIST: I hope we shall continue this discussion. I find it most illuminating.

SEVERAL: Come again. Let's continue the argument.

THE LEADER: Lunch with us to-morrow and spend an hour afterwards talking.

SOCRATOV : With pleasure. I am just as interested in your point of view as you are in mine.

THE LEADER (*shaking hands with Socratov*) : Till to-morrow then, Tovarishch [1] Socratov !

THE ROTARIAN : What's that " Tovarishch ? " It seems I have heard that word before.

[1] The Russian word for " Comrade," commonly used in the U.S.S.R. in addressing communists.

DIALOGUE II

In which the Historical Background and Development of Russian Revolutionary Philosophy is discussed.

THE SENATOR (*to Socratov*) : The thing that impressed me in your Revolutionary Museum was to realise what a long history the revolutionary development had. To be frank, I never thought of it before.

THE ROTARIAN : I wonder whether that fellow they kept in the cage—Pugatchev, I think, the guide called him—had a philosophy when he cut the throats of the gentry ?

SOCRATOV : There never was a revolutionary movement without a philosophy, although there are many philosophies which are not revolutionary.

THE BANKER : That bandit, Pugatchev, had a philosophy ? I'd like to know what it was, although I don't care for philosophy.

SOCRATOV : Well, it may be difficult to give his philosophy a name. Its background was mystical and religious. Pugatchev, like Cromwell, was a dissenter from the Established Church. He found his backing among the so-called Old Believers, a sect to which many of the Cossacks belonged. Its philosophy was distinctly apocalyptical. The oppressors were called Anti-Christ. The Tsars, particularly since Peter and Catherine II, had favoured the strengthening of the nobility at the expense of the free peasants, whom they forced into servitude. As a result of this, many of the peasants were ready to revolt. They responded to the appeal of the dissenting Old Believers not to pay tribute to Anti-Christ. Pugatchev declared himself the reincarnation of the murdered Tsar Peter III. He led peasants and Cossacks in his attempt to free the throne from the usurper Catherine II. The people knew quite

well that their leader was the simple Cossack, Pugatchev, but they mystically conceived that justice was embodied in him as the reincarnate Peter III.

THE PROFESSOR : Your comment on Pugatchev corroborated the view that after all Russia was not so different from other countries, where similar conditions produced similar results. The oppression of the peasants in England created the Leveller's movement ; and in Germany a similar revolt was led by Thomas Muentzer somewhat earlier, in the beginning of the 16th century. All of these movements had a religious background and an apocalyptical philosophy, although of course they took forms which corresponded to the cultural traditions of the different people.

THE HUMANIST : Our radical movements, particularly in England and to a lesser extent in America, are touched with a religious ideal to this day. I saw no trace of that in your Revolutionary Museum. How would you explain that, friend Socratov ?

SOCRATOV : Our revolutionary movement since the days of Catherine has had its counterpart in the intellectual class, which at that time was almost limited to the higher nobility. These looked for guidance to the West, particularly to the encyclopedist philosophers of the French revolution and in a certain degree to English Liberals such as Adam Smith.

THE REFORMIST : Wasn't Denis Diderot the favourite Philosopher of Catherine II ? Didn't he live at her Court ? It seems to me that this was the channel by which French materialism was introduced into Russia and so became the leavening force of Russian revolutionary thought.

SOCRATOV : Quite so. But at that time, the Masonic mystical philosophy and similar cults penetrated the ranks of the Liberal nobility. This was especially true after the French revolution had frightened Catherine and her courtiers, who then took refuge in mysticism. Mystical philosophies of the intellectual type always flourish in times of reaction, whereas materialist philosophy is always the sign of the ascendency of a revolutionary period.

THE HUMANIST : Our guide showed us the exhibits of what he called the Decembrists Movement, telling us that it was an uprising of the nobility and the Imperial Guards. Their purpose, he said, was to make an end of autocracy and to introduce a Liberal government in Russia. Tell us a little more of the philosophical background of this seemingly romantic but ineffective movement ?

THE ROTARIAN : Were many people killed in the fighting ?

SOCRATOV : The cowardly, but brutal Nicholas I, executed the chief participants : I think there were five. Besides this, some soldiers and officers who came out to the Senate Square in Petersburg on that December day in 1825 and demonstrated against the newly ascended autocrat, Nicholas I, were shot by the Imperial Guards who remained loyal. Many more sympathizers were arrested and exiled to hard labour in Siberia. The significance, however, of this movement lies not in its tragic culmination, but in the fact that it marked the close of a Liberal period in Russia, during which useless efforts were made to persuade Tsar Alexander I to terminate autocracy voluntarily and limit the Monarchy by a constitution. Now, as to the philosophic background of this movement, it was Liberal in its tenets, chiefly inspired by the social philosophies of Rousseau and Adam Smith. It was a time when the best minds felt that autocracy was no longer a historical necessity for Russia and should give place to more liberal forms of government and of class relations.

THE PROFESSOR : I have just been reading a splendid account of the development of revolutionary thought in Russia. The author quotes a certain Russian statesman, Speransky, who had in my opinion a clear vision of the necessity of change in the Russian social order of which our friend Socratov has just spoken.

SEVERAL : What does Speransky say ?

THE PROFESSOR : Well, if you wish, I shall read it. The document was written in 1809 and was addressed to the Tsar Alexander I (*reads*) :

" The Russian state is now passing through the second stage of the feudal system, namely, the epoch of autocracy. Undoubtedly, it is tending directly towards freedom. In part this tendency is even more straightforward in Russia than in other countries. The unfailing signs of it are : (1) That people lose all esteem for the former objects of their veneration, e.g. for rank and honour. (2) The action of power is so weakened that no measure of government can be put into operation which calls only for moral and not also for physical constraint. The true reason of this is that at present public opinion is in entire contradiction to the form of government. (3) No partial reform is possible, because no law can exist, if it may any day be overtaken by a gust of arbitrary power. (4) A general discontent is observed such as can only be explained by a complete change of ideas and by a repressed but strong desire for a new order of things. For all these reasons we may surely conclude that the actual form of government does not correspond to the state of popular feeling, and that the time has come to change this form and to found a new order of things."

THE SENATOR : Speransky was a wise statesman. What he asked was not at all exhorbitant.

THE BANKER : And what did the Tsar do ?

SOCRATOV : He did what the governing class always does in such situations, he exiled the prophet-statesman, and after the Napoleonic Wars, joined hands with other reactionary monarchs in Western Europe to form the so-called Holy Alliance. No, my friend, there was never a governing class which gave up its power unless it was forced to do so by the strong arm of the newly ascending class. That is why we Bolsheviks believe in revolutions. Revolution always means the use of the new creative forces against the forces of reaction.

THE REFORMIST : I think we ought to distinguish, however, between the old autocracies and those republican governments which possess all the necessary constitutional means to make social progress possible without revolution.

THE BANKER AND SENATOR (*simultaneously*) : Yes, yes ! that's our point of view.

SOCRATOV : But not our point of view. No governing class, whatever the form of government, yields power voluntarily. This was true of feudal autocracies and it is just as true of the capitalist class with its bourgeois republicanism and pseudo-democracy.

THE HUMANIST : Of all the movements represented in the Museum, I was most deeply impressed by the heroism of the Narodniks.

THE ROTARIAN : Yes, those poor men we saw sitting in those awful, dark cells, with their feet chained to the floor, and their hands in shackles. Tell us something more about them. It must be awfully interesting.

THE PROFESSOR (*a little indignant*) : You can read all about those people in their memoirs. Nicholas Morosov, Vera Figner and others survived their imprisonment and have written vivid accounts of their experiences.

SOCRATOV : The development of the Narodnik movement began in the second quarter of last century, during the dark, sterile régime of Nicholas I. Philosophically, it was associated with the left Hegelian movement, which started shortly after the death of Hegel, a century ago. The Hegelian philosophy had its own unique development in Russia. Both nationalists and revolutionists were inspired by it. The Napoleonic Wars had awakened the national consciousness of the Muscovite aristocracy, which rebelled against mere imitation of the West. They made efforts to create a national art, literature and philosophy ; and so gave rise to the cultural movement known as Slavophilism. While it produced many brilliant publicists and philosophers, this movement was essentially reactionary. In its search for strictly national ideas, it gave romantic interpretation to the old Russian feudal institutions such as the parish land commune of the Russian peasantry, the orthodox church and the autocratic government. These were considered the pillars of a new civilization and culture. In adapting Hegel's dialectical philosophy, they reasoned that the

" Weltgeist " (The Absolute Spirit) which Hegel had brought to consciousness through the Germanic race, must complete another cycle of evolution, the so-called " mystical metampsychosis of the Absolute " ; and according to the Slavophils the " Weltgeist " was to reappear in the Russian people, and make them the final torch-bearers of enlightenment and emancipation for the human race.

THE REFORMER : Would you mention a few of the outstanding thinkers among the Slavophils ?

SOCRATOV : A. S. Khomyakov and K. S. Aksakov, both voluminous writers, are among their most brilliant thinkers. Another, Prince Odoyevsky, who wrote about a century ago, and whom I have been reading recently, made this statement, which is characteristic of Slavophil thought :

> " We venture to make the assertion, which to many at present may seem strange, but which will be in a few years only too evident ; Western Europe is on the high road to ruin ! We Russians, on the contrary, are young and fresh and have taken no part in the crimes of Europe. We have a great mission to fulfil. Our name is already inscribed on the tablets of victory ; the victories of science, art and faith await us on the ruins of tottering Europe."

THE PROFESSOR : The Prince was not such a false prophet, if one considers what Spengler has to say about the decline of the West.

SOCRATOV : Not all of the Muscovite philosophers shared the narrow nationalistic exclusiveness of the Slavophils. Some of them, whom we might call the left-wing of the Russian Hegelians, while believing in the historic mission of the Russian people could not share the orthodox Slavophil enthusiasm for the reactionary church and autocracy. They considered these institutions as remnants of feudalism, which only a social revolution could sweep away. However, they believed that a communist social order could develop out of the remnants of the peasant land commune and that Russia might be spared the capitalist development which was holding Europe in its

grip. They put their faith in the common people, so that they came to be called "Narodniks," from the word "Narod" meaning "the people." Unlike the Slavophils they appreciated Western culture and believed in the possibility of a synthesis of Western with Russian creative thought. Because of their sympathy for the West, they are also known in Russian literature as "Westernists." They, too, were students of Hegel, but they gravitated to the young Hegelians and were strongly under the influence of Feuerbach. While still far from developing a scientific theory of revolution, they must nevertheless be considered the forerunners of Russian socialism, which reached its culmination in contemporary communist philosophy.

THE HUMANIST: You told us yesterday that Feuerbach was the greatest of humanist philosophers. Would it be proper, then, to consider this early Russian Narodnik movement as a distinctly humanist movement?

SOCRATOV: It would. One of the brilliant humanists of that early period was the young V. G. Belinsky whose death in 1848 at the age of thirty-eight years was mourned by the Russian intellectuals. As a writer and literary critic he is unparalleled in Russian literature and is read to this day. During his short life he rapidly passed from the metaphysical and romantic philosophies of Schelling, Fichte, and Hegel to the humanist conception of Feuerbach; and at the time of his death, showed signs of having grasped the more scientific dialectical materialism which was being developed by Marx and Engels in the West. Belinsky inspired many other young intellectuals who continued his work.

THE REFORMIST: Whom do you consider the most valuable among these thinkers? We know so little of the early history of Russian revolutionary thought and the movements which it guided.

SOCRATOV: We can only fully understand the present revolutionary thought in the light of the past. The period we are discussing undoubtedly had a tremendous influence in shaping the thought of at least two generations of revolutionists. We

must not forget Alexander Herzen, born in 1812, the unwanted child of a romantic morganatic marriage.

THE ROTARIAN : What kind of marriage ?

SOCRATOV : His father was a Russian nobleman who married a Baltic girl of the lower middle class. This was considered a disgrace among the haughty Russian nobility. His mother called him " Hertzen," meaning " child of my heart," and this name he retained to the end of his life in 1870. He was a profound thinker and an able writer, who revolted against the deadening régime of Nicholas I. Owing to his radical ideas he was forced to flee from Russia and reached Europe on the eve of the revolutionary events of 1848. The reaction which set in after the defeat of the revolutionists depressed him. His judgment was that " commonality is the last word of a civilization founded upon the unlimited right of private property." He observed that the spirit of the bourgeois was penetrating all the fibres of Western society, even the socialist movement. He said :

> " The idea of a social revolution is an European idea, but the conclusion should not be drawn from this that the Western peoples are the only ones called to realize it. . . . In fact, should socialism prove unable to re-establish decaying society and complete its destiny—Russia will complete it. . . . *The revolutionary idea of socialism can become with us an idea of the people.* Whereas in Europe socialism is taken for the phantom of disorder and terror, with us, on the contrary, it appears a prophetic vision of the future development of our people."

THE PROFESSOR : This is a remarkable statement and how prophetic ! One would think it was written yesterday.

SOCRATOV : It was written about three-quarters of a century ago. Even then Herzen saw no solution for existing social problems in political reforms and parliamentarianism. He staked his faith on a social revolution which he hoped could be grafted upon the institution of the peasant land commune and so become the basis of socialism in Russia. In this respect he was quite at one with the Slavophils. This he fully realized.

> "We and the Slavophils," he said, "represented a kind of two-faced Janus; only they looked backward and we looked forward. At heart we were one; and our hearts throbbed equally for our minor brother—the peasant—with whom our mother country was pregnant. But what for them was a recollection of the past, was taken by us as a prophecy for the future."

THE SENATOR: This Herzen was certainly a clever man, but I wonder whether he really had any influence on the great masses of the people.

SOCRATOV: Herzen voiced his ideas in a political newspaper called the *Kolokol*, which means the "Bell." It was published in London and smuggled into Russia, where it was read very widely by the intellectual groups. It is said that it was even read at court. Herzen was not alone in this movement, although, unquestionably, he was the most brilliant among the writers of that time. Their agitation gave the impetus to a revolutionary movement in Russia which was accelerated by the disasters of the Crimean War and by the death of Russia's most uncompromising autocrat, Nicholas I. Emancipation became the cry of the day, emancipation of the peasant from serfdom, of the citizen from the state, of the women from patriarchal tyranny and of the thinker from authority and tradition. There was to be struggle to the end against every institution that was irrational or oppressive, whether political, economic, religious or social. The new order was not merely to be the improvement of existing conditions, but was to be built upon positive scientific principles, and to revolutionize society from its foundations.

THE SENATOR: And how did the government react to this agitation?

SOCRATOV: Alexander II, who succeeded the brutal Nicholas, promised radical reforms. He could not resist the tremendous pressure of awakened public opinion, which at any moment threatened to break into open revolution. On February 19, 1861, the Tsar signed the famous act of emancipation whereby fifty-two million serfs were nominally freed. This act called

forth unprecedented enthusiasm among all classes in Russia and abroad. Herzen addressed the Tsar in his periodical, "The Bell," with the words: "Thou hast conquered, O! Nazarene!" and urged him to continue the reforms by other equally revolutionary measures.

THE HUMANIST (*moved*): Yes, that was the time when our great reformers and poets, inspired by your example, encouraged Lincoln to emancipate the American negro from slavery; to justify America before civilized humanity and "prove this puzzle the New World, and to define America, her athletic democracy," as Walt Whitman expressed it.

THE REFORMIST: Now, Comrade Socratov, aren't these historical references proof that things can be accomplished by reform without revolutionary action?

SOCRATOV: On the contrary, these so-called reforms of Alexander II by no means solved the problems of Russia. When the conditions of the emancipation became known, a heavy gloom was cast over the friends of the common people. At its best the Act was a compromise favouring the landowners, who were allowed to exact an abnormally high price for the land ceded to the peasants. Besides keeping the best soil for themselves. Thus from the very start the peasant was condemned to perpetual poverty. As a result of these stillborn reforms, a new impetus was given to revolutionary action. A wave of peasant uprisings followed, of which 2,000 are recorded. The intellectuals organized secret societies, of which some turned to acts of terrorism, to one of which Alexander II himself fell a victim. An outstanding personality who provided a philosophical justification for direct action was Michael Bakunin, a contemporary and friend of Alexander Herzen.

THE PROFESSOR: The anarchist, Bakunin, who became an active opponent of Marx in the "International Workers' Association," of which they both were charter members?

SOCRATOV: The same Bakunin.

THE ROTARIAN: Was he a nobleman?

SOCRATOV: Like most revolutionists of that period, he came from the upper classes and was educated to be an officer in the

Tsar's army. He was born in 1814 and died in 1876. His restless nature drove him from Russia in 1840, and he took part in almost all the revolutions of that period which swept over Western Europe. He loved to fight on a barricade, and spent many years in jail. Twice he was sentenced to death. His difference with Marx, chiefly of a temperamental nature, expressed itself also philosophically. Both of them began as left Hegelians, but while Marx soon went his own way, developing his dialectical materialism, Bakunin remained in principle a humanist of the Feuerbachian type.

THE REFORMIST: Is there any historical relation between Bakunin's teachings and activities and the Anarcho-Syndicalist movement of the Latin countries of Western Europe?

SOCRATOV: Yes, Bakunin may be considered the father of the anarcho-syndicalist philosophy and movement and his name is by no means forgotten, particularly in France and Spain. These people are by temperament as well as by their economic development much more inclined to embrace anarchistic doctrines. Another reason is that in some of these countries many feudal institutions such as the Latin church, still exert considerable political and economic influence.

THE PROFESSOR: Would you mind giving us the philosophic presuppositions of Bakunin's reasoning, which apart from his temperamental bias led him to his anti-state anarchic conclusions?

SOCRATOV: In establishing his anarchic principles, he commences from Nature, which he calls the "universal life." In its development through the inorganic, the organic and the social life, Bakunin observes that nature strives towards individualism, and the increase of individual liberty appears to him to be an unfailing sign of growing perfection. By means of toil, and thanks to his reason, man becomes conscious of liberty. Thus while man is the most individualized being, he is equally the most socialized, and society is the natural phenomenon of all human existence. Bakunin was opposed to the legislator because he believed that man governs himself rather by disposition and traditional customs, than by law. In

periods of advance and change, man attains progress, not because of the thought and will of the legislator, but through the individual impulse and initiative stimulated by his social environment. On the basis of these principles, Bakunin rejects the political state working by law and government. To him the State, if I quote him correctly, is but :

> " A huge cemetery in which occur self-sacrifice, death and burial of all the phenomena of individual and community life, of the interests of those parts which, in their aggregate, compose society. It is an altar to which the real liberty and welfare of the people is brought as a sacrifice to political greatness ; the more the sacrifices are extended the more the State is complete."

THE HUMANIST : I never thought I was an anarchist, but to be frank, many of these ideas which Bakunin expresses have occurred to me and I really feel a certain kinship of mind with him, though of course I draw the line at the question of violence, I am a pacifist.

THE SENATOR : Well, I tell you, sir, we who stand at the wheel of the ship of State, prefer the anarchist to the pacifist type. With men like Bakunin we know what to do, but those pacifist Tolstoyans, Gandhists and humanists or whatever you call them, those who stay within the law, they are much harder to get.

THE BANKER : Yes, especially when they pretend to be religious and instead of preaching law and order as the church should do, insidiously undermine the faith of our citizens. I always said we must run the " Reds " out of the pulpit, and engage only ministers who are loyal to our flag and traditions. Pardon me, but honestly that anarchist talk gets on my nerves.

SOCRATOV : Bakunin pointed out that the State is always in the possession of the privileged classes : the priesthood, the nobility and the bourgeois. Unlike the Marxists, however, he held that classes arise from what he calls " natural patriotism " which is carried over into human society from the animal stage preceding human development. It is instinctive, mechanical and deprived of any critical attachment. Hence classes

are the result of biological variations rather than of economic changes. Bakunin called for the rejection of the centralized state, which was to be negated by anarchy in order to reappear in voluntary federal organizations. Expressing himself in the language of the Hegelian trilogy he views " the centralized states as thesis, anarchy or amorphism as antithesis, and federation of the independent groups of people as synthesis." Anarchism as the antithesis, the stage upon which, according to Bakunin, society was entering, was to be attained by direct action through what he called " the propaganda of the deed," and by teaching that the revolutionary end justifies the means. This I think briefly sums up the revolutionary philosophy and tactics of Bakunin.

THE PROFESSOR: That was well stated. Now, perhaps you may tell us how far his teachings and tactics were practised in the Russian revolutionary movement.

SOCRATOV: During the sixties and seventies of last century and to a certain degree in the 1905 revolution, there were many followers of Bakunin's teaching and tactics in Russia. During his life, so much of which was spent in jail or in exile, he did not have the direct influence which might have been the case had he been in direct contact with the masses. Shortly after the emancipation of the serfs, Bakunin hoped for an immediate and successful revolution in Russia. He thought that the peasantry would not accept the conditions of emancipation when these were to be enacted in 1863. He and his followers had great faith in the revolutionary abilities of the peasants. They pointed to the rebellion led by Stenka Razin in the 17th century and to the Pugatchev rebellion in the 18th century which almost succeeded in defeating the government troops of Catherine II. Why should this be impossible now, when the masses were so dissatisfied with the conditions of their emancipation? They proceeded to create secret organizations consisting chiefly of students of both sexes who began their propaganda among working men, soldiers and peasants. The first of these organizations was known as " The Great Russian." A radical group soon broke away, following Bakunin's tactics. It was

known as the " Land and Liberty Society." It planned for an immediate rising of the peasants and workers to coincide with the Polish rebellion in the summer of 1863. The region of the Volga, where Pugatchev's rebellion took place, was chosen. A forged manifesto in the name of the Tsar was circulated. This proclaimed liberty to all classes and granted full property rights without pay to the peasant. The conscripted soldiers were to be freed from service and compensated by grants of land. There was to be no more conscription and no *per capita* tax. All government officials were to be elected by the people. The manifesto stated that should the local authorities resist the enforcement of the manifesto, the population was authorized to rise in rebellion. This daring effort failed and a number of the conspirators were executed.

THE ROTARIAN : My ! but weren't they great schemers, those revolutionists ?

THE REFORMIST : And how did the population respond ?

SOCRATOV : During this period the country was swept by a wave of peasant uprisings of which about 2,000 are recorded. But these were not synchronized nor directed by any organization and therefore they were doomed to fail. They were bloodily suppressed by the government police and troops.

THE HUMANIST : Certainly a dramatic page in the history of your people. I am anxious to hear how this drama unfolded itself.

THE BANKER (*drawing out his watch and turning towards the leader*).

THE LEADER : I think we have had a solid intellectual meal this afternoon. Our friend, Socratov, must be tired. How about a recess and a cup of tea ?

THE PROFESSOR : A recess won't hurt, but I suggest that we continue our discussion after tea, since we have no other engagement for to-day.

SEVERAL : A splendid idea, provided Socratov can stay.

SOCRATOV : At your service, gentlemen.

DIALOGUE III

In which the Discussion of the Previous Subjects is continued.

THE PROFESSOR (*turning to Socratov*) : You were about to tell us of the further developments of the revolutionary movement after the failure of violent uprisings during the summer of 1863.

SOCRATOV : That failure had a double influence. The majority of intellectuals felt that the peasants and the workers were not prepared for self government, even if they succeeded in gaining their independence. They favoured educational propaganda and a gradual preparation of the masses for the revolution. The leader of this more moderate movement was N. Chernishevsky, a profound philosopher and influential publicist. A minority group held to Bakunin's doctrine and would not believe that education was necessary as a preliminary to revolution. The masses are always revolutionary they said. The leader of the " direct-action " group was the Bakunist, Nechayev, a student known for his ruthless and dominating character. He wrote a " Catechism of Revolution," which teaches " direct action " and justifies everything, even murder, if it serves the end. He put this extreme theory into practice in the case of one of his followers who disobeyed his orders. When another student, Karakhozov, attempted to assassinate the Tsar on April 16, 1866, a merciless persecution of all revolutionaries was launched by the government.

THE ROTARIAN : Did the student kill the Tsar ?

SOCRATOV : No, on that occasion the Tsar escaped, but he was successfully assassinated in 1881.

THE HUMANIST : And what about Chernishevsky ? Was he involved ?

SOCRATOV : He did not approve of Jacobinism. He was a philosopher of the period of transition from utopian to scientific socialism. Like other Russian revolutionists of that period he began as a Hegelian of the left, but was also strongly influenced by French and English positivism. In later years he became acquainted with Marx and came to share his opinions, and some historians consider him as the first Russian Marxist. He was a voluminous writer and editor. His utopian novel, *What is to be Done?* although not of high artistic quality, had tremendous influence in spreading revolutionary ideas among the intellectual youth of Russia. His popularity and influence made him the victim of government persecution. He was exiled to Siberia for twenty years, which broke his health, though not his spirit. He was one of the many martyrs for the cause of freedom.

THE HUMANIST : And what became of his work ?

SOCRATOV : His work lived, for the country was pregnant with revolution. New leaders arose as soon as exile or death had removed the old. During this period there appeared a number of brilliant young intellectuals who prepared the Russian people to think in terms of revolution and, what is still more important, the social base of the revolutionary movement was shifting to the side of the common people. You remember that in the days of the Decembrists the revolutionary movement was largely confined to the higher military nobility. Here, a generation later, it had penetrated the intellectual class, and was beginning to influence factory workers and certain elements among the peasantry.

THE PROFESSOR : Sometime ago I read about a certain Mikhailovsky, who impressed me as an exceedingly penetrating mind. Does he belong to this group ?

SOCRATOV : Well, he is rather the culmination of the group. He was preceded by such able thinkers and writers as Pissarev, Dobrolyubov and Peter Lavrov, all of whom, as well as Mikhailovsky, are known as " Narodnik " philosophers and leaders. Pissarev was called the philosopher of the Nihilist movement, and probably was the most radical thinker in this

group, having been strongly influenced by Bakunin. He boldly cast aside all tradition in the belief that all old institutions must be destroyed to create a new mankind. Strength of mind and body, he considered, would be the determining factors in the selective struggle which would result in the emancipation of personality. These individualist interests alienated him from Marx, who had impressed him deeply by his profound scholarship. As a thorough-going Nihilist he traced all evil to ignorance and saw salvation only in science, particularly in natural science.

THE HUMANIST: There is a character in one of Turgenyev's great novels, called Bazarov, who seems to me to represent the type which you represent as idealized by Pissarev.

SOCRATOV: Your judgment is right. In commenting on the novel, *Fathers and Sons*, of which Bazarov is the hero, Pissarev says:

> "At present young people are carried away and fall into extremes, but in these various passions fresh forces show themselves and their minds, without any outside means of influence, will lead these young people into the right road and assist them in life."

Although a philosopher, he was above all a propagandist who inspired his readers by his bold and passionate utterances. A similar type was the young Dobrolyubov, a pupil of Chernishevsky, whose death in 1861 at the age of twenty-five was greatly lamented. With the passing of these men, Peter Lavrov became the acknowledged leader and philosopher of the Narodnik movement. He prepared a party platform containing two principles of struggle; one was directed against the theologico-metaphysical concept of life, which was to be replaced by the scientific concept; the other was the struggle of the toiler for equality and opportunity against the idle consumer and against monopoly.

THE REFORMIST: Was he not one of the more moderate men in the Narodnik movement?

SOCRATOV: He firmly opposed the tactics of Nechayev, Bakunin and others who wanted a revolution without any

preparatory education of the people. He stood for the principle that no means should be used which might defeat the end. He insisted that revolution could not be realized artificially; it would be successful only when the people were ready and when other conditions were equally favourable. Revolutionary failures are regrettable, although he conceded that these, too, have educational value. Like most Narodnik platforms, that of Lavrov accepted the peasant commune as the basic economic institution of Russia, but recommended that it be made more efficient by the education of the peasantry.

THE PROFESSOR: And how about his philosophy? Did he differ in any way from the other Narodnik thinkers?

SOCRATOV: He differed chiefly in his enormous erudition. A child of his time, he was trained as a Hegelian and the Hegelian scheme of trilogy is easily discernible in all his writings. In his social philosophy he emphasized three principles; solidarity as the thesis, individuality as the antithesis and social progress as the synthesis. Lavrov was also influenced by the positivist philosophy of Comte and Spencer and to a certain degree also by Karl Marx. He called himself a socialist, and while appreciating the importance of economic change in the evolutionary process of society he was no economic determinist, and should be classed as a humanist and utopian. In his social philosophy he always emphasized the individual as the only real factor in society and the exceptional individual as the vehicle of progress.

THE HUMANIST: Well, that sounds to me like good humanist doctrine. I don't see why it should not be equally valid to-day.

SOCRATOV: I shall explain that presently, but now permit me to continue. When Lavrov fled in 1870 to escape exile, N. K. Mikhailovsky became the intellectual leader of the Narodnik movement, exerting through his brilliant writings an enormous influence upon his generation. His death in 1904 marks the turning point in the development of Russian revolutionary thought. He may be considered the last of the great line of famous Narodnik thinkers and writers. Like Lavrov, he championed the interests of the individual, and " the struggle

for individuality" became the basis of his system of social philosophy. He fought for the preservation of the peasant commune which had begun to show signs of disintegration, owing to the invasion of industrial capitalism. On the issue of the peasant commune and the proletarianisation of Russia, Mikhailovsky crossed swords with the ascending Marxists, Plekhanov and the younger Lenin. The latter showed that the preservation of the commune was a mythical ideal, that Russia was falling in line with the mechanical revolution and that any effort to preserve the commune artificially could not solve the problem.

THE REFORMIST: Was he also a Hegelian?

SOCRATOV: Mikhailovsky may be called a radical positivist and empiricist. He followed Hume as corrected by Mill; Comte also influenced his thinking, but he was strongly opposed to the application of Darwinian principles to sociology, considering them anti-democratic. He did not under-value Darwin's contribution to the explanation of the origin of the species. But for him progress meant anything which contributed to the integrality and development of the individual. He disliked the modern system of division of labour and mass production, because of its harmful influence on the development of individuality.

THE HUMANIST: In your discussion so far you have not mentioned the famous anarchist philosopher, Prince Peter Kropotkin.

THE ROTARIAN: What! An anarchist prince! That must be interesting! Tell us about him.

THE BANKER (*turning to the Senator*): This is certainly a crazy country, where princes turn anarchists.

SOCRATOV: Peter Kropotkin stands somewhat apart in the history of our revolutionary thought and movement. He is akin to the Narodniks in that he intended to construct his new anarchist co-operative commonwealth by grafting it on to the peasant land commune.

THE SENATOR: Pardon me, sir, for interrupting. You have mentioned the peasant land commune, but you have not so

far told us what this commune was. Some of us are rather ignorant about an institution of which we know nothing in our democratic country.

SOCRATOV : The peasant land commune is a very ancient pre-feudal institution, tracing its origins probably to primitive communist society. It was quite general throughout Europe and Southern Asia, but it survived longer in Russia, and exists to this day in India. The land of a certain village or settlement was held in common ownership by all the inhabitants born there, or accepted as members by the community. The land was periodically redivided among the members according to the number of souls in each household, and for this reason the unit of land was called a " soul." While the land was owned in common, it was worked separately by each household. This was the original peasant land commune.

THE REFORMIST : Hasn't this principle been preserved by the Soviet Government in its policy of collective farming ?

SOCRATOV : With this difference, that the present units are not always limited to a village. Besides, now not only is the land owned in common, it is also worked in common, usually with the aid of modern agricultural machinery. But let us return to Kropotkin. I said he shared the Narodnik idea of common land-ownership, but he wanted to develop it into the idea of co-operative associations federated among themselves into societies independent of any centralized state.

THE ROTARIAN : I beg your pardon, but I thought you were going to tell us about the life of this prince and how he became an anarchist.

SOCRATOV : Prince Kropotkin came from an old Russian family which probably had a better claim to the throne of Russia than the Romanov dynasty. He was born in 1842 and lived to see the triumph of the proletarian revolution in 1917. He was educated as an aristocrat in the Tsar's School of Pages, and was to be an officer in the Russian Imperial Guards. Being both exceedingly intelligent and a noble sensitive soul, he could not resist the challenge of the peasant emancipation movement in the early sixties. At that time many noblemen

joined the ranks of the revolutionists. In Russian literature they are called the " repentant aristocracy." Western capitalist countries are experiencing a similar movement at present when the sons of capitalists turn socialist and communist. You might call them the " repentant plutocracy." Kropotkin joined Chaikovsky's radical group at Petersburg and became active as a revolutionary agitator. In 1872 he was arrested and exiled, but he escaped to Europe in 1876, where he lived until the 1917 revolution. He died in Moscow in 1920, venerated by his people and by revolutionists of all parties and countries.

THE PROFESSOR : In scientific literature he is frequently mentioned as the author of *Mutual Aid, a Selective Factor in Evolution.*

SOCRATOV : I was just about to say that while in exile in Siberia he had opportunities to observe animal life, uncontrolled and undisturbed by man. He concluded that within the species, the habits of co-operation and mutual aid are as much a factor making for survival as the Darwinian struggle for existence between species or between individual members of the same species. These facts of natural history, together with an emotional reaction against the arbitrary powers of the State, produced his anarchist philosophy. He defines his anarchism as the " no-government system of socialism." Commenting on this definition, he says :

> " In common with all socialists, the anarchists hold that the private ownership of land, capital and machinery has had its time : that it is condemned to disappear : and that all requisites for production must and will become the common property of society and be managed in common by the producers of wealth. And in common with the most advanced representatives of political radicalism, they maintain that the ideal of political organization of society is the condition of things where the functions of government are reduced to a minimum and where the individual recovers his full liberty of initiative and action for satisfying by means of free groups and federations . . . freely

constituted . . . all the infinitely varied needs of the human being."

He was convinced that anarchism will come about as a result of social evolution, in which process revolution is an integral part. In nature, he says, no evolution is accomplished without a revolution. Periods of very slow change are succeeded by periods of violent change. Revolutions are as necessary for evolution as are the slow changes which prepare them and succeed them.

THE SENATOR: But how can you hold a people together if you have no state and no law? They would fall apart like the staves of a barrel when the hoops are cut. The State and the law are the hoops which hold society together.

SOCRATOV: According to Kropotkin, all social aggregates, whether animal or human, are held together by the sense of sympathetic oneness with each other and with all which each individual possesses. Thus, firstly the sense of oneness or of solidarity of the individual with his species, and secondly a federated co-operation through mutual-aid rather than the compulsory forces of the law and the state are the chief factors which hold society together. In *Mutual Aid* he has shown that the greatest progress in art, industry and science has been made when society was organized and held together on a voluntary co-operative basis rather than by the hoops of State-made law. Mutual aid tends towards communism. In communist society the individual will come into his own. "Communist individualism," says Kropotkin, "is not a war of each against all, it is an opportunity for a full expansion of man's faculties, the superior development of whatever is original in him, the greatest fruitfulness of intelligence and will."

THE BANKER: Would you tell us the difference between the anarchistic communism of this prince and the communism you stand for.

SOCRATOV: We do not differ as to the goal. We, too, look forward to a classless society, when the State as a compulsory class institution will disappear, but we differ greatly in our

philosophic presuppositions and in the methods we use to attain our common goal. Philosophically, Kropotkin was a positivist and empiricist, and this obscured in him the ability to grasp the dialectical process of historical development. While he did not deny the importance of the group struggle, he had no clear conception of the class struggle, which is intensified by the changing processes of production and distribution. His aversion to any kind of centralism makes him fail to see the dialectical necessity of a centralized state in the transitional period, as a necessary antecedent to the communist order with its free, co-operating individuals. Kropotkin's social philosophy failed to become the philosophy of the proletarian revolution ; it failed because it ignored the dialectic process of evolution which gives a meaning to apparent contradictions in modern society.

THE REFORMIST : You emphasize the failure of the Narodnik philosophy to become the philosophy of the proletarian revolution because it could not grasp the dialectical processes of the changing economic conditions. But isn't it true that the Narodnik movement had a tremendous influence in setting the mind of the people towards a social revolution ?

SOCRATOV : The activities and teachings of men like Kropotkin, Chernishevsky, Lavrov and many others aroused the enthusiasm of intellectual youth and culminated in the general movement in the summer of 1874 known as " going among the people." This movement was like a crusade in which not only youthful students but many teachers, physicians, officers and even officials joined the ranks. They denied themselves comforts and underwent many hardships in order to preach the new gospel of liberty to the people. The results of this crusade have been variously estimated. In its immediate results, it was a failure, for the peasant did not readily respond, and often turned against his enlightener and delivered him over to the authorities. Perhaps the greatest gain was to the propagandists themselves. While they went to the people as metaphysical, utopian dreamers, many of them returned prepared to embrace scientific socialism ; others became

desperate and took to the terrorist method of " propaganda by deed." The latter formed what is known as " The People's Will Party," which split off in 1878 from the older organization known as " The Land and Liberty Party." " The People's Will Party " set many terrorist activities on foot and finally succeeded in assassinating Alexander II in 1881. Another faction of " The Land and Liberty Party " gave birth in 1879 to the " Cherny Peredel," which means the " Black Soil Partition Party." This body advocated a redistribution among the peasants of the land then held by the landlords, the church and the crown. It also sought to unite the interests of the growing city proletariat with those of the agrarian population. This effort was made particularly by one of the charter members of the " Cherny Peredel," G. V. Plekhanov, who also sought to adjust the Narodnik philosophy to that of Marx.

THE PROFESSOR : This point of transition from the Narodnik utopianism to scientific socialism interests me. Would you mind enlarging on it a little ?

SOCRATOV : The transition can best be understood in the light of the economic development of Russia. Up to the eighties of last century there existed in Russia no understanding of the class struggle or of the sociological meaning of " classes." Revolutionists of that epoch used the term " Narod " (people) by which they really meant the peasant, the other classes being insignificant in numbers compared with the mass of the peasant population. The chief and common enemy of the revolutionists from the ranks of the " penitent aristocrats " and of the intellectuals generally was autocracy with its lingering feudal institutions. Thus the Narodnik movement may be considered as the dawn of the approaching industrial revolution. It is quite clear that the cities and other industrial centres could not develop without a supply of free, cheap labour and this meant of course that peasant serfdom had to be abolished.

THE HUMANIST : A similar situation existed in the United States, which could not accomplish industrial expansion without first abolishing slavery.

SOCRATOV : Quite so, only we must remember that neither the Russian Narodniks nor the American abolitionists understood this social process. In Russia there were many who held to the utopian notion that their country could escape capitalism and they staked their hopes on the peasant land-commune as the basis of a higher communistic social order. They believed that co-operative peasant home industries would be sufficient to supply the population with the necessary manufactured goods. They forgot that the machine is not romantic. Once having made its appearance in England it was launched on a world conquest, irresistibly moving east and west, crossing the borders into Russia. This movement took the Narodniks by surprise and created confusion in their ranks. The rapid development of railway construction, mining, machine building and textile industries on a large scale, with enormous concentrations of labour, smashed the Narodnik dream of a " non-capitalist " development of Russia.

THE HUMANIST : Oh, how I hate the machine ! I bow before the genius of Gandhi, who revives the spinning wheel to protect his people against the machine.

SOCRATOV : Our Narodniks, particularly Tolstoy, tried the same idea some decades previous to Gandhi, but could not stave off the advance of industrialization. A few figures tell the story of the impotence of sentiment against the machine. Railway construction in Russia increased from 1,500 kilometers in 1860 to 50,000 kilometers in 1900. Corresponding to the development of railways, the other heavy industries such as coal, iron, steel and machine building progressed. When a railway penetrates a country it is like a dagger. The nation cannot live its old life without first extracting the dagger. Neither Tolstoy nor Gandhi ever suggested that railways should be discarded and that nations should turn back to the horse and cart. The heavy industries inevitably produce the development of light industries. In the decade between 1890 and 1900 the number of spindles in the Russian textile industry increased from 4.3 million to 6.6 million, or over 50 per cent. In 1850 there were less than 600,000 factory workers, by 1900

they had increased to more than 2,600,000. These workers were herded into a relatively small number of large industrial centres. Thus the ignorant, meek and docile peasant of yesterday was disciplined and organized by the machine into a class with a psychology quite new to Russia. This was first revealed by the tremendous solidarity of strike movements such as the textile workers strike in St. Petersburg in 1896, in which about 30,000 workers participated.

THE PROFESSOR: These are hard facts. To deny them is folly, yet how difficult it is for even intelligent people to see all the implications of these economic changes.

SOCRATOV: The genius of our great intellectual leaders, particularly of Plekhanov and of Lenin, recognized in these proletarian uprisings the awakening giant who had in him the power to overthrow not only the autocracy but also the bourgeoisie and to establish a proletarian socialist order. At that time, however, the bourgeoisie was also longing to rid itself of the remnants of feudalism. They wanted a government with a liberal policy, favourable to industrial development. The controversy which developed and continued for decades between the Narodnik and Marxian philosophers was chiefly concerned with the role of the working-class in the revolutionary movement of Russia. Plekhanov and Lenin stood for the hegemony of the working class, and maintained that the revolutionary intellectuals and the peasants should be an important, but still an auxiliary force.

THE ROTARIAN: Did you say "by jiminy" of the working class? What do you mean? In America it is a mild cuss word.

SOCRATOV: I said "hegemony," which means the leadership of the working-class and the supremacy of its aims, which are naturally quite different from those of the liberal bourgeois. The Marxists considered the overthrow of autocracy an initial step to the solution of the more important and difficult problem of overthrowing the bourgeoisie. The bourgeoisie was to be expropriated and a dictatorship of the proletariat established. This would initiate a social revolution leading towards

communism. The Narodniks aimed at the overthrow of Tsarism. In idealizing the peasant, they became petty bourgeois in outlook. Their goal would have been reached with the establishment of a republican government on democratic lines. These fundamental differences in the philosophy and the goal of the two wings of the Russian revolutionary movement made conflict between them inevitable. The downfall of Tsarism and the success of the Marxian socialists in establishing the dictatorship of the proletariat naturally drove the Narodniks to a counter-revolutionary position and into an alliance with the bourgeoisie.

THE REFORMIST: I see your point, that the ideology of your Narodniks must have produced such a conflict. But I don't see why Lenin turned against his teacher Plekhanov and the Menshevik faction, which he led, and organized the Bolshevik Party which crushed the Mensheviks so mercilessly.

SOCRATOV: That is a long story. To answer your question it will be necessary to make a general survey of political movements and their parties in Russia. I can hardly do it now.

THE LEADER (*looking at his watch*): It is getting late and our friend must be very tired. A very important question has just been raised. I have frequently wondered whether the unfortunate split in the Russian socialist movement was necessary. If our friend, Socratov, will take up this subject to-morrow? . . .

SOCRATOV: As you wish. I am free. This is my vacation time.

THE ROTARIAN (*while the rest rise*): I am sure if these Bolsheviks and Mensheviks and social revolutionists and whatever else you call them, had known our rotarian ideas of sharing the good with each and all, they would have profited greatly, and saved themselves all that fighting.

DIALOGUE IV

In which the Development and Philosophy of the Russian Revolutionary Parties is discussed.

THE PROFESSOR : In our previous discussions we learned that a radical public opinion was rapidly growing in Russia, and that it was held together by a common hatred of autocracy. I was also impressed by the fact that the various progressive forces in Russia did not differ greatly in their aims and methods, with the exception of that small " terrorist " group which went its own way. This unity, however, did not last. Changing economic conditions, as our friend Socratov has shown us, greatly differentiated revolutionary thought and action. This process of differentiation and the rise of the new movements and parties which finally brought the revolutionary forces to victory is the subject which I think we should discuss now, provided our friend Socratov agrees.

SOCRATOV : Your approach is correct. After all, revolutionary ideas are only abstractions from the subconscious forces present in the masses. Towards the close of the nineteenth and at the beginning of the present century there were signs which showed that the Russian people were ripening for participation in political life in spite of the efforts of the sterile Russian autocracy to hold them back. A feverish underground activity was in progress, preparing for battle with autocracy. Evidence of the process was to be found everywhere. It was at this period also that the principal opposition parties were formed which finally overthrew the old régime. I shall mention only the three outstanding groups. They were the Liberal-Constitutional Democrats, who represented the industrial bourgeoisie, the rural gentry and some of the intellectuals affiliated with

them ; the Socialist Revolutionaries, who championed the interests of the lower middle classes in town and village ; and the Socialist-Democratic Labour Party, which stood for the interests of the proletariat. The social democrats gradually split into two parties, the Bolshevik and the Menshevik factions, of which the former finally triumphed, and is now known as the U.S.S.R. Communist Party of Bolsheviks.

THE REFORMIST : So you insist that the social forces rather than personal differences determined stratification of political parties in your country. You probably know that many socialists think the splits among the social-democrats were due to Lenin's uncompromising attitude towards the opinions of others and perhaps also to his personal ambitions.

SOCRATOV : An analysis of the history of the last two or three decades will give you the best answer, but now permit me to return to our discussion. I shall deal first with the " Cadet " party as the constitutional-democratic party was popularly called, from its initials CD. It came into being at the beginning of the century under the leadership of Professor Paul Milyukov and Peter Struve. The latter had formerly been a social-democrat. The Cadets continued the liberal traditions which were first established by the Decembrists, but grafted them on to the interests of the young Russian industrial bourgeoisie. They had some support from the progressive rural gentry. The liberals gained their first victory in 1864, when they wrested from the Tsar the right of provincial assemblies, the so-called " zemstvos " in which the majority of seats were guaranteed to the landlords. These assemblies were to contribute to local legislation and to the economic and cultural improvement of the provinces. It was hoped that these concessions to the gentry would secure their loyalty to the throne. While on the whole this was the result, there still remained many zemstvo leaders who wanted to federate these provincial assemblies into a national parliament of their elected representatives. In other words they were after a constitutional government and a limitation of the autocratic powers of the Tsar.

THE PROFESSOR : Wasn't there an analogous movement on the part of the higher nobility to create a second chamber representing the upper nobility, like the House of Lords in Great Britain ?

SOCRATOV : Yes, such far-sighted leaders of the higher nobility as Count Orlov-Davydov and Prince Dolgoruky favoured such a system when the zemstvos were created. But all of these efforts for a moderate constitutionalism in Russia found no sympathetic response on the part of the Tsar and his advisers. On the contrary, the reforms of 1864, which were granted under threat of revolution, were gradually nullified and the zemstvos were emasculated as self-governing bodies and rigidly controlled by the bureaucratic machinery of the state. This was particularly the case under Alexander III and his son Nicholas II, the last of the Romanovs. The manifesto of Alexander III in 1881, which was written by the ultra-reactionary Pobyedonoscev, High Procurator of the Holy Synod, declared his determination to preserve autocracy, which the manifesto said was " necessary and useful for Russia." Thirteen years later, when Nicholas II ascended the throne and the zemstvos timidly petitioned the young Tsar to lessen the rigidity of autocracy, he replied on the occasion of his wedding, January 29, 1895, by reading a statement prepared by the same Pobyedonoscev. I have brought this statement with me and shall quote a few sentences from it :

> " I am aware that in certain meetings of the zemstvos voices have lately been raised by persons carried away by absurd illusions as to the participation of the zemstvo representatives in matters of internal government. Let all know that, in devoting all my strength to the welfare of the people, I intend to protect the principle of autocracy as firmly and unswervingly as did my late, never-to-be-forgotten father."

THE HUMANIST : A modern Rehoboam saying : " My little finger is thicker than my father's loins. And now, whereas my father did lade you with a heavy yoke, I will add to your

yoke. My father chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions." But this Nicholas II could not boast a father with the wisdom of a Solomon !

SOCRATOV : Royalty doesn't seem to learn from experience. The liberals were roused, and they answered the challenge in an open letter, which might be taken as a declaration of war on autocracy in Russia. While moderate in tone, this declaration contains passages which must have been shocking to the ear of the Tsar. For example, take this statement :

> " You have spoken your mind and your words will be known to all Russia, to all the civilized world. . . . January 29 has dispelled that halo which surrounded your young, uncertain appearance in the eyes of many Russians. You yourself have raised your hands against your own popularity. But not your popularity alone is now at stake. If autocracy in word and deed proclaims itself identical with the omnipotence of bureaucracy, if it can exist only so long as society is voiceless, its cause is lost. It digs its own grave and soon or late—at any rate, in a future not very remote—it will fall beneath the pressure of living social forces. . . . You first opened the struggle and the struggle will come."

The liberals organized their forces and a decade later became the constitutional-democrats. For a time this party was moderately revolutionary and sought to co-operate with the socialist parties for the overthrow of the autocratic regime. When, however, in 1905 the constitution was granted, and it had attained its chief end, it naturally ceased to be radical and became in fact counter-revolutionary. It demonstrated this by its effort to preserve the monarchy after the abdication of the Tsar in 1917. Of course it was a bitter opponent of the Bolsheviks in their efforts to turn the political revolution into a social, proletarian revolution.

THE SENATOR : And what has become of it ?

SOCRATOV : It has disappeared in this country, together with the class, the bourgeoisie, which it represented. Some of its

leaders are still alive and Milyukov edits an anti-soviet paper in Paris.

THE PROFESSOR : Did their philosophy differ in any way from that of the older liberals ?

SOCRATOV : Not much. Struve, as I mentioned, was a socialist to begin with, and a critic of the humanist Narodniks, whom he charged with ignoring the revolutionary fact that capitalism had entered Russia and that much could be learned from it. In the process of learning, he soon evolved into a " revisionist " of Marxism and by 1902 had become, in association with Milyukov, the recognized ideologist of the progressive bourgeoisie. In characterizing his party, Milyukov differentiates it from the Russian socialist movement in these terms :

> " The former works for ' social peace ' while the other aims at an ' inner social revolution ' ; one is rather humanitarian, while the other is a strictly class doctrine ; one is ' opportunist ' and works through compromise, while the other is uncompromising and works through social struggle."

The party platform followed the traditional demands of the liberals such as guarantees for private property, liberty of conscience and belief, equal civil and political rights and representative, though not necessarily republican, government. This I think is all that it is necessary to say about the so-called liberal movement in Russia. It failed, because it ignored, and even set itself against the true interests of the toiling masses, comforting them with bourgeois parliamentarianism, in which our masses had long since lost confidence.

THE REFORMIST : As far as I could make out from your analysis, the Cadet Party was not an offspring of the Narodnik movement.

SOCRATOV : The traditions of the Narodnik movement found expression rather in the party of socialist revolutionaries, which shaped itself in the beginning of the century from the remnants of the old " People's Will " movement. It claimed to be an inter-class party in which the interests of the peasants,

the workers and the intellectuals should find equal consideration. It was very popular among the students because of its romantic past and the many heroic individuals it had produced—fighters and terrorists who, so to say, had attacked the leaders of autocracy single-handed.

THE ROTARIAN: How interesting! Tell us something about those heroic terrorists, who, as you say, attacked their political enemies single-handed.

THE PROFESSOR (*annoyed*): I don't think it would be advisable. The lives of these men and women are exceedingly romantic and interesting. I was profoundly moved by the works of Stepnyak and by those of the late Savinkov, who had a most romantic career. First, plotting to kill the Tsar, he spent his life in dangerous, underground, revolutionary work facing death at every step. Then he turned against the Bolshevik revolution, making common cause with the interventionists. Then, repenting, he delivered himself to the Soviet Government to stand a public trial, in which he exposed the reactionary designs of the Allies against the soviets. He finally ended his life by suicide, throwing himself out of the window of the room where he was confined.

THE ROTARIAN: I must read those stories, if they are to be had in English.

SOCRATOV: The life of a man like Savinkov symbolises the history of the party of socialist revolutionaries. Romantic and tragical! It made great sacrifices, but only to betray the revolution for which it fought, so committing suicide as a party and a movement. Kerensky, another of their outstanding leaders, whose career is too well known to be repeated here, is equally an illustration of the opportunist romanticism of the party of socialist revolutionaries. If you want to know the real reason for its debacle, turn to its aims, its theory of party organization and its underlying philosophy. Continuing the old Narodnik tradition, it had no clear conception of the class struggle and prided itself on being an inter-class democratic organization. Its chief and immediate aim was the overthrow of autocracy and the establishment of a democratic republic.

Organizationally, also, it was rather heterogenous. It organized the so-called " Agrarian League " which was conservative in its tenets and limited its interests to obtaining the crown lands and other large estates for division among the peasants. But, again, it had its secret fighting organizations plotting terrorist acts against the authorities, frequently at the instigation of agents-provocateurs, such as the infamous Azev, who was one of the leading personages in the terrorist wing of the party. On the one hand he organized and carried out terrorist acts against important personages, while on the other he was employed by the secret police to protect the Tsar and his family and sent to the gallows many of the terrorists whom he incited to action. This heterogeneity of elements paralyzed the actions of the party and made impossible a consistent, clear cut programme leading towards a new social order.

THE REFORMER : Would you explain the attitude of the socialist revolutionaries to the Marxian philosophy and tell us who was their leading thinker ?

SOCRATOV : Their chief ideological leader was Victor Chernov who was born in 1873 and so far as I know is still living somewhere in Western Europe. He followed the philosophic traditions of Lavrov and Mikhailovsky, and carried on the futile attempt to synthesize materialism and idealism in the way suggested by German empirico-critical philosophy of Avenarius, Mach and Riehl. While borrowing elements from the economic teachings of Marx, he is definitely opposed to philosophic Marxism and not only seeks to explode the " Marxian myth," as he loves to call it, but thinks he has worked out a synthetic social revolutionary philosophy of life, in which theoretical realism is to be united with active practical idealism. Thus he says :

> " Man is not at all a *tabula rasa*, upon which outer objective conditions and forces may freely write anything they may desire. Man is also a complete power of nature, presenting in himself one of the highest complex combinations of the elementary forces of nature ; like every other force he possesses his own definite inner laws of self-

activity and he manifests co-ordination of active tendencies."

THE HUMANIST: That sounds rather good to me. There are distinct humanist overtones in this kind of reasoning.

SOCRATOV: Precisely so. In emphasizing the emotions and the will, Chernov naturally arrives at the theory that strong individuals are the real makers of history, instead of the *Classes* as Marx insisted. Chernov wavers between idealist subjectivism and the materialist conception of history without finding the desired solution. This inability to formulate a consistent working philosophy was a calamity for the revolutionary party which he led. After the downfall of Tsarism, when his party, under Kerensky, got into power it was unable to steer a steady course through the turbulent sea of conflicting class interests. In harmony with its philosophy it tried to synthesize or rather compromise between the petty bourgeois and socialist interests, between imperialistic nationalism and internationalism as this was particularly felt under the conditions of the world war. As the result of this compromising nature and the predominance of petty bourgeois elements in its ranks, the party of socialist revolutionaries gradually drifted into counter-revolution till it finally made alliance with monarchists and foreign interventionists. Since its defeat in the Civil War it has ceased to be a force in the life of the people of the Soviet Union.

THE HUMANIST: A tragedy, when one thinks of the great sacrifices that the Narodnik humanists and revolutionaries made for over a century! Think of it! Hardly a trace of them left in the political and social life of this country.

THE PROFESSOR: Well! And yet some of you say that philosophy has no practical value. In the struggle between the Narodnik idealists and the Marxists we have a distinct struggle between two systems of philosophy, in which the Marxians proved to be the fitter to survive. (*Turning to Socratov*). We are now prepared to hear the story of the ascendency of the Bolsheviks and their role in the historic drama of your revolution.

SOCRATOV: The Communist Party of Bolsheviks grew out of

the Russian Socialist-Democratic Labour Party, which in turn sprang from smaller groups of Marxian socialists. In 1883, Plekhanov founded a group known as the " Emancipation of Labour." Similar groups sprang up in different parts of the country, which were organized a decade later, in 1894, with Lenin's direct participation and on his initiative into the " Union for the Struggle and Emancipation of the Working Classes." This was a larger organization carrying on intensive propaganda among the industrial proletariat of the larger cities, organizing and leading great strikes, which were rapidly gaining in revolutionary and political significance. A similar movement was going on among the various minor nationalities of Transcaucasia, such as the Armenians and the Georgians. To a still greater degree, the socialist movement was spreading among the Jewish proletarians of White Russia through an organization known as " The Bund." All these different groups were in contact with one another and decided in 1898 to unite to form a political party. For this purpose they met in secret congress at Minsk, now the capital of White Russia.

THE REFORMIST : Was it Lenin who organized the congress ?

SOCRATOV : No. A year before he had been arrested and exiled to Siberia. Nevertheless, he continued to watch these new developments with intense interest from a distance. The congress adopted a programme, organized a central committee and issued a manifesto written by Peter Struve, who at that time was still a socialist. The manifesto contained among other things the following striking statement :

> " Political freedom is needed by the Russian proletariat, as pure air is needed for healthy respiration . . . but the needed political liberty, the Russian proletariat can conquer only for itself. The Russian proletariat will cast off the yoke of autocracy in order to continue, with still greater energy, its work against capitalism and the bourgeoisie up to the complete victory of socialism."

THE HUMANIST : And what was the result of this appeal ?

SOCRATOV : As far as the masses were concerned, it never reached them. The Tsarist Secret Police was well informed

of the congress and laid its own plans to crush the new party. The delegates, on reaching home, were arrested and sentenced to long terms of imprisonment and exile. Naturally, not many practical results followed from the congress. Its significance is largely historical.

THE SENATOR : It is a wonder that under such conditions any opposition parties could be started at all.

THE PROFESSOR : The fact that there were parties which in the long run were able to overthrow autocracy, in spite of inhuman obstacles, shows that the real revolutionary force was within the masses. But don't let us interrupt Socratov's story.

SOCRATOV : Lenin spent his years of exile in intense study and in laying plans to continue the revolutionary struggle. While in exile he decided to found a revolutionary newspaper, which because of the government press restrictions he thought to publish abroad and circulate secretly in the industrial centres of Russia. In 1900 Lenin's term of exile terminated and he went abroad where he published his newspaper, *Iskra*, which means " The Spark." For a motto it carried the prophetic words, " The spark shall burst in burning flame."

THE HUMANIST : The other day at the Revolutionary Museum, our guide showed us an exhibit which was a poem of Pushkin's, from which I think he said that line was taken.

SOCRATOV : The motto was taken from a poem by Prince Odoevsky, whom I have quoted before. It was suggested to him by a poem by Pushkin, " Message to Siberia," written in commemoration of the exiled Decembrists. It is one of the finest poems that Pushkin wrote.

THE HUMANIST : One of our American radicals, Max Eastman, has translated it into English. When I first read it, I memorized some of its beautiful lines to use in one of my addresses. It begins :

" Deep in the Siberian mine,
Keep your patience proud ;
The bitter toil shall not be lost,
The rebel thought unbowed.

And ends :

" The heavy-hanging chains will fall,
The walls will crumble at the word ;
And Freedom greet you with the light,
And brothers give you back the sword."

THE ROTARIAN : Oh, that's beautiful ! I'd like to copy that poem if you can remember it.

SOCRATOV : Let me try to translate the reply of Prince Odoevsky to Pushkin's poem. Unfortunately, being a philosopher, I may fail to render you the work of a poet in perfect form. It is called, " A Reply to Pushkin " :

" Our bitter toil shall not be lost,
The spark shall burst in burning flame ;
Our loyal godly Russian host,
Shall gather round our banner's name.

" Our chains we shall forge into swords ;
Again to blaze with Freedom's fire,
Shall storm with them the Tsar's cohorts,
With joy the people shall respire."

THE HUMANIST : Well, friend Socratov, I never suspected poetry in a Bolshevik, but now I see that I was mistaken.

SOCRATOV : Who knows ? There may be poetry in Bolshevism, although I shall not be the one to reveal it to the world. But let us return to our story. At that time the *Iskra* was of great importance to the future development of the Russian revolutionary movement and its ideology. Almost all the prominent Russian Marxists contributed to the paper and its editorial staff included, besides Lenin and Plekhanov, such well-known social democrats as P. B. Axelrod, I. O. Martov, A. N. Potresov, V. I. Zasulich, and Lenin's wife, N. K. Krupskaya. The importance of the *Iskra* was not confined to propaganda and to its function as a link between the scattered groups of

Russian social democrats. It also afforded an opportunity for the leaders to express their ideas and to become conscious, not only of the ideas which united them, but also of those which differentiated them. That a stratification of minds was inevitable under existing historical conditions is quite easy to understand. The future lay unknown although their goals were clearly set. Now to attain these goals was the source of much difference of opinion between the leaders. This showed itself particularly on the questions of party organization and tactics. It seemed that only a congress of the party could decide these issues. Lenin and others of the *Iskra* used the paper as the means to prepare and to call a congress which took place in the summer of 1903 during July and August. It began its sessions in Brussels and was later transferred to London.

THE ROTARIAN: Why did they go to London?

SOCRATOV: Because the Belgian Government, probably under the influence of the Tsar's diplomats, prohibited the continuation of the congress in Brussels. Forty-four delegates were present at this congress, representing twenty-six local organizations of the party. The order of the day contained many knotty problems which this gathering had to settle. It soon became evident that there were profound differences of opinion among the delegates, some of which would not be settled by compromise without violating the principles and aims of the Socialist movement.

THE PROFESSOR: Would you mind telling us what these issues were?

SOCRATOV: The first battle was fought on the question of national rights in the party. The representatives of the Jewish Bund demanded that their association be recognized as "the only representative of the Jewish proletariat living in Russia." This was opposed by Lenin and others, who held that the Jewish workers like other nationalities should be members of the same party with due consideration for their right to use publications in their own language and to have auxiliary local organizations wherever a sufficient number of adherents existed.

To this the Bund was opposed and, seceding from the party, left the conference. Still more important was the controversy between Lenin and Martov on the question of the future constitution of the party. In presenting a draft of the constitution of the party, Lenin proposed in paragraph 1, that only those should be considered members of the party who accepted the platform, paid membership dues, joined a local organization of the party, took active part in its work and subjected themselves to its direction. In short, Lenin stood for an active, rigidly disciplined party. Martov presented a counter-proposal defending a less rigid system. He considered it sufficient for the members to work under the general control of the party, assisting it in one way or another. He argued that Lenin's system would exclude many sympathizers, particularly among the intellectuals, who would not take the risk of joining a local underground party organization. After prolonged and heated debate, Lenin lost by one or two votes and Martov's formula was accepted.

THE REFORMIST: Is this the same Martov who later became a leader of the Mensheviks, along with Plekhanov and Axelrod?

SOCRATOV: The same man. The split between the two trends of opinion was represented at this congress. The wedge which finally split the party was the question of co-operation with the liberals. We know already that the leaders of the Cadets flirted with the revolutionary parties in an effort to use their services in the fight against autocracy. Martov and other future Mensheviks at the congress proposed co-operation with the liberals, if the latter would include in their platform a plank demanding equal franchise for all classes. Lenin, on the other hand, warned them against too close a co-operation with the liberals, pointing out that while politically at this stage of Russian history their programmes had much in common, it should be kept in mind that economically and socially the socialists were class enemies of the bourgeoisie and that a fight with them was imminent. Finally, the difference sharpened on the question of who should compose

the board of editors of the *Iskra*. Lenin wanted a small, unanimous group representing the ideas of the majority of the party. After heated discussion it was decided to have Lenin, Plekhanov and Martov as editors, that is have both factions represented. However, Martov withdrew in protest, Lenin and Plekhanov being elected by a vote of twenty-five to twenty-three. At that time Plekhanov favoured Lenin's ideas. Martov felt that he would be in the minority and for this reason he withdrew. Because of the majority of votes which Lenin received, his following were called the Bolsheviks and Martov's the Mensheviks.

THE BANKER: I am always getting confused about these Russian words. We are hearing so many of them now. Would you mind telling us what they really mean?

SOCRATOV: Bolshevik is derived from the word "bolshoi" which means large. The Bolsheviks were the larger part, the majority faction of the congress. Menshevik is derived from the word "menshi" which means the lesser, and the Mensheviks were the minority faction. Although the fortunes of opinion in later congresses of the party frequently went against the Bolsheviks and they were at times left in the minority, this name, like a prophecy, stuck to them and the Bolshevik party to-day is numerically the greatest political party in the world. While the party nominally remained united after the congress, the differences which the gathering brought out deepened, the struggle between the leaders became more intense and in the long run ended in a complete separation at the Stockholm conference in 1912. Nevertheless, the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks continued to be known as fractions of the socialist party, the former accepting the name of communist party only in 1918. The compromising spirit of the Mensheviks led them to join with the bourgeoisie in the 1905 revolution, to oppose the Bolsheviks in the October revolution of the proletarians in 1917 and take part finally in counter-revolutionary activities along with the remnants of the bourgeois parties and the foreign interventionists.

THE REFORMIST : But weren't the defeats of the 1905 revolution at least in part the fault of the Bolsheviks, who insisted on armed uprisings when they were warned against them by the less hot-blooded Mensheviks ? The defeat could have been avoided and with it the horrible reaction which followed, had the Bolsheviks been a little more ready to make common cause with the progressive elements in the country.

SOCRATOV : If we had compromised, we would probably be in the same boat as the German socialists or the Macdonald labourists, filling the role of lackey to the bourgeoisie and the imperialists. True enough, Lenin's following shrunk after the disaster of 1905. At that time many members of the party were losing their philosophic bearings in the search for a solution of their difficulties and Lenin had many a bitter struggle which showed him to be not only a capable leader, but equally a profound critic and philosopher. Then came the World War, the acid test of Marxian consistency. Many of the Russian socialists, even Plekhanov, could not resist the rising tide of nationalistic patriotism. Lenin, together with a handful of followers, stood firm on his Marxian principles. He understood that the war was the result of rival capitalist imperialisms and he sent out his call to the proletarian revolutionists of all countries to join their strength and turn the weapons which the bourgeoisie had placed in their hands for killing each other, against the imperialist instigators of the war. His slogan was " Turn the Imperialist War into a Civil War." For such daring he was considered mad. Some accused him of being a German spy ; but history has justified him and the handful of Bolsheviks which returned with him to Russia after the abdication of the Tsar got the upper hand over rival parties.

THE PROFESSOR : I think that history has given its verdict in favour of the Bolsheviks, not only because of their class-conscious, iron party discipline and fearless tactics, but equally, if not more, because of their consistent philosophy. This I think expresses Lenin's genius. He was no mere imitator of Marx and Engels and Hegel, since he showed unprecedented

skill and ingenuity in applying the Marxian philosophy to the intricate historical situation created by the World War, the downfall of Tsarism and the subsequent intensification of the struggle between the various classes for power and the control of the State. If this discussion has taught me anything, it is that a distinct philosophy underlies the so-called Bolshevik experiment during and after the revolution. It seems to me that the best we can do is ask our friend to continue these discourses by showing us the sources and the various stages of development of communist philosophy.

THE LEADER : What is the opinion of the group ?

THE HUMANIST : I agree with the professor, that philosophy is the key to the understanding of communism as of everything else. I would however ask our friend, Socratov, not to confine himself to discussing sources and theories, although, of course I appreciate their importance, but also to unfold to us if possible the underlying philosophy of art, ethics and religion, which is the flower of any culture.

THE ROTARIAN : Yes, that would be very nice.

THE SENATOR : Well, if I am to attend all these discussions, then I suggest that Mr. Socratov should also take up the underlying philosophy of the soviet system of government.

THE BANKER : That's all right, but I'd like to know what they mean by their talk about world revolution. Is that a part of their philosophy ?

THE LEADER : Well, I think that almost everybody has some special interest in these discussions. I hope that our friend, Socratov, will be able and willing to sacrifice his precious time to enlighten us on these subjects.

SOCRATOV : At your disposal, gentlemen. And I shall try to come better prepared than I have been hitherto.

THE LEADER : Well, then, till to-morrow !

DIALOGUE V

In which the Sources of Communist Philosophy are discussed.

THE PROFESSOR: Yesterday, we agreed to continue our discussion of communist philosophy, beginning with a study of its sources. I think you will all agree, that while communist philosophy is something unique and original, it is also a continuation, and even a synthesis of the thinking of past generations. Last night I was reading Engels' *The Development of Scientific Socialism*. In the introduction to this excellent little volume, Engels says: "We German socialists are proud to trace our origin not only to St. Simon, Fourier and Owen, but also to Kant, Fichte and Hegel." This shows that the founders of scientific socialism considered their philosophy continuous, not only with utopian socialist thought, but also with the German classical philosophy. However, our friend Socratov knows these things much better than I.

SOCRATOV: You have the right approach, Professor. If I were to add anything, it would be a line from the founder of Russian Marxism, G. V. Plekhanov, who said, "the materialism of Marx and Engels is a kind of Spinozism." So, you see that the master minds who have contributed to the making of communist philosophy all agree that they have but continued to spin the thread of thought which others had begun many centuries before, and have woven it into the fabric which to-day we call "dialectical materialism." Communists everywhere recognize Marx, Engels and Lenin as the makers of their philosophy. But as we heard just now, Marx and Engels recognized that they had learned from others, particularly from Hegel, who is the unsurpassed master of dialectics. The

dialectics of Marx, Engels and Lenin are a direct continuation and further development of Hegelian dialectics. Hegel was the culmination of the great German idealist movement in philosophy and while Marx and Engels rejected philosophic idealism, they did not reject Hegel's dialectics.

THE HUMANIST : My curiosity is aroused by the rather paradoxical statement of Plekhanov that the materialism of Marx and Engels is a kind of Spinozism. What has Spinoza to do with materialism ? Is he not considered the father of modern spiritualist philosophy ? At least I was taught so in my university course.

SOCRATOV : Well, we rather think the contrary and consider him the father of modern materialism. Of course Spinoza was not a dialectical materialist. His materialism was predominantly static. Feuerbach, as well as some of the French materialists, especially Diderot, related their materialist conceptions to Spinoza. Hegel himself in his *History of Philosophy* represents French materialism as the *realization* of Spinoza's " substance." Feuerbach, in his *Principles of the Philosophy of the Future* writes :

> " Spinoza, with his paradoxical statement, ' God Himself is extension,' i.e. material being, hit the mark. He found for his time at least the true philosophical expression for the materialist tendency of that time ; he legalized and sanctioned it ; God Himself is a materialist. Spinoza is the Moses of freethinkers and materialists."

The first thing which makes Spinoza kin to dialectical materialists is his *recognition of an objective world.* This cannot be over-emphasized. As you well know, Kant's critical philosophy denies to man the possibility of knowing the real objective world. It stigmatizes contrary opinions as either " naive realism " or " dogmatism." Similarly, Fichte held that strictly speaking only two consistent philosophical systems are possible, " dogmatism " and " criticism." Spinoza and the materialists he referred to as of the dogmatic type ; the idealist and agnostic positivist schools belong to the system of criticism.

THE HUMANIST : Exceedingly interesting. I am trying to recall whether Spinoza himself realized the seriousness of the epistemological problem which was so ably presented by the Kantian school.

SOCRATOV : Spinoza was fully aware of the problem. In his tract " On the Purging of the Intellect," he indicates four ways by which knowledge is attained. The first is from the words of others (*ex audita*) ; the second by indefinite experience (*ab experientia vaga*) ; the third, that in which the essence of things is derived from other things, but not adequately ; while the fourth and final method produces knowledge of a thing, (1) exclusively through its own essence (*per solam suam essentiam*), or (2) through the knowledge of its approximate cause (*per cognitionem suae proximae causae*). Only by this last method, says Spinoza, is an " adequate knowledge of a thing attained without any danger of error." From this analysis Spinoza concludes that knowledge is of two kinds ; on the one hand vague, imaginative and doubtful ; on the other clear, definite or adequate and true.

This, briefly stated, is Spinoza's theory of knowledge, and so far as it goes, it is shared by dialectic materialism. Of course, Spinoza in turn was influenced by the materialists of antiquity such as Democritus and Heraclitus and by Bacon, the founder of modern empiricism, and also in a way by the rationalism of Descartes. The main point is, however, that Spinoza was convinced of the possibility of knowing adequately the *one substance*, which he called " God " or " Nature," and which he conceived as existing independently of consciousness.

THE PROFESSOR : Isn't that the chief difference between what you call Spinoza's materialism and Kantian idealism ? The first postulates an objective world independent of consciousness and the second recognizes only subjective experience as the source of all knowledge ?

SOCRATOV : Precisely, and for this reason we call Spinoza a materialist, for he does recognize a material world, a substance having extension. Let me quote from him, for I consider it most important that you should get this idea : " As substance,

I understand that which exists in itself and is conceived through itself (*quod in se est, et per se conciptur*) " ; i.e. Substance is a concept which does not need the concept of another thing from which it must be formed. This " substance " is self-sufficient and cannot be produced by anything else. " *Deus sive substantia* " (God or substance), this was Spinoza's favourite expression. " By God," he says, " I understand absolute infinite being, i.e. substance." Again, he speaks of " *Deus sive natura* " (God or Nature). This one substance or nature Spinoza endows with many attributes of which he emphasizes " mind " and " extension," i.e. quality and quantity. " Idea and body " (i.e. soul and body) " is one and the same individuality (*unum et idem est individuum*), represented in the one case under the attribute of thought, in the other under the attribute of extension."

THE REFORMIST : Do we not usually call this doctrine psycho-physical parallelism ?

SOCRATOV : That is a great mistake and reduces Spinoza to a mechanistic materialist. In his reasoning, " mind " and " extension " or " quality " and " quantity " are *not the same* but they are *in unity*, indivisible and potentially present in nature and matter. Our materialism makes its starting point with Spinoza when stripped of his theological terminology, for which there is no need in our time. On the other hand, there is also a real difference between our philosophy and that of Spinoza. We emphasize the dialectics of our materialism by which we mean its continuous self-movement, and therefore the logical categories of our reasoning are not static like Spinoza's rather fixed and permanent geometric constructions. Then, Spinoza's substance was metaphysical, extension and mind were always present like body and soul. Spinoza is thus a thorough-going hylozooist which we are not. In our evolutionary reasoning we introduce the attribute of time, we say that mind is only potentially present in the inorganic universe and appears as a new quality in time when matter reaches a more highly organised stage of development. Therefore our dialectical materialism is not the same as Spinoza's

metaphysical pantheism and Plekhanov said too much in calling Marxism " a kind of Spinozaism."

THE HUMANIST : While recognizing the things which are to you essential in Spinoza's philosophy, it seems to me you are wrong in ignoring his profoundly religious nature and interests.

SOCRATOV : The religious aspect of Spinoza's life has not been ignored by us as you think. On the contrary, it has provoked considerable discussion among our philosophers. True enough some of them deny his religious interests altogether, calling him the " Prince of Atheists " and the " Moses of Free-thinkers." They point to his " Herem " from the synagogue.

THE ROTARIAN : He had a harem ? I thought you said he was an ascetic ?

SOCRATOV : " Herem," not harem. The former is a Hebrew word meaning excommunication. It is also pointed out that Spinoza was a sharp critic of Jewish and Christian theology and of the Bible. He also affirmed his solidarity with the classical atheistic materialists. In a letter to Baksel, he speaks scornfully of Plato, Aristotle and Socrates and eulogizes Epicurus, Democritus and Lucretius. On another occasion he wrote that " religious prejudices and superstitions transform people from rational beings into beasts, since they altogether prevent the use of one's own reason to differentiate truth from falsehood and seem purposefully designed to quench finally the light of reason."

THE REFORMER : Is this the majority opinion among your philosophers ?

SOCRATOV : Probably it is, but still there are some outstanding thinkers, such as L. Axelrod, who consider Spinoza deeply religious in spite of his break with traditional theology. He preferred the use of the term " God " where " Nature " would have served just as well because the " Cult of Jehovah " had firmly gripped the subtly poetic soul of the great thinker. The central thought of Judaism, that the goal of life and the highest blessedness is the service of God and man, has not left the philosopher." To corroborate her argument she quotes from one of Spinoza's letters :

> " I consider that God is, so to say, the immanent and not the transcendent cause of things. ' All is in God and moves of God ' ; this I say even though in a somewhat different sense from Paul and perhaps from all the old philosophers and I would even dare to say from all the ancient Hebrews—so far as one may judge by traditions which are in many respects distorted. However, if some readers think that the ' theologico-political tract ' proceeds from the thought of the sameness of God and nature and that by ' Nature ' is understood some kind of mass or tangible matter then they are altogether in error."

THE HUMANIST : Well, it seems that this quotation makes it perfectly clear that Spinoza did not identify God and nature. Hence your theory that he was a materialist fails.

SOCRATOV : If we confined Spinoza's work to this isolated sentence written in a casual letter, you would be right. But when we take Spinoza in his entirety the picture changes. One of our critics of L. Axelrod, the philosopher N. Karev, thinks that the quotation which I have just given you is taken out of connection with what precedes it. There Spinoza says : " First of all I must say that my view of God and nature differs greatly from the view which is defended by modern Christians. I consider that God is, so to say, the immanent . . . etc." Here follows the quotation cited by L. Axelrod. Besides, Karev points out that this letter was written toward the close of 1675, about a year before the death of the philosopher. It thus appeared after the writing of Spinoza's *Ethics*, in which he definitely and repeatedly says that " God " and " nature " are the same " substance." Thus the apparent contradiction of this letter must be explained by other circumstances. Karev believes it may be explained as " expediency." Spinoza was writing to his friend Oldenburg, Secretary of the Royal Society in London, who was greatly alarmed by the fact that Spinoza saw no difference between " God " and " nature." He asked Spinoza to correct his error. Apparently Spinoza, when he wrote this letter, " expressed himself applicably to the understanding of the mass," to use his own words, i.e. he

wanted to quiet a friend who could not grasp his radical ideas. Karev concludes: "He adapted himself to the level of understanding of Oldenburg" and fixed a difference between "God" and "nature." Spinoza in this case has in mind not *nature in its entirety*, but nature in the narrow meaning of the word, as commonly understood, i.e. a certain mass or tangible matter, *specifying* it and placing it in opposition to thought and consciousness.

THE HUMANIST: Granting that Karev is right in his criticism and that the work of Spinoza in its entirety finally forces him to embracing a materialistic conception of substance, that does not to my mind exclude him from being religious. After all he was a child of his people and of his age and there were subtleties in his character which together with his early religious experiences persisted independently of any conclusions which may be derived from his metaphysical conceptions of "God" and "nature." My studies in philosophy and science have radically altered the views of "God" and "nature" which I was taught in my youth; I must confess that the God of my fathers and of the Church in which I was brought up has ceased to be God to me. From your point of view, I am an atheist, yet I am not prepared to call myself one, because there persists in me this profound desire for fellowship with the universe and that inexplicable urge to continue the struggle for justice and brotherhood among men. I know that these are not rationally established categories. They are a part of my emotional life, and hence I call them religious. It seems to me that Spinoza had a similar experience, which persisted long after there was any rational justification for it in his philosophy. Here may lie the answer to the contradictions which your philosophers have exposed but not explained.

SOCRATOV: There may be something to this, however, it may also be that he was unable to bridge the gulf between "quality" and "quantity" and was therefore compelled to speak of "God." He deifies nature not because he was of Jewish origin and saturated by religious emotion. On the contrary, religious emotion arose in him because he was definitely against

religion and yet, like Feuerbach, was unable fully to solve the main problem. As Skurer, one of our philosophers, said, " with Feuerbach this resulted in a ' religion of love,' with Spinoza in a ' spiritual love of God.' "

THE PROFESSOR : This controversy regarding the contradictory elements of rationalistic materialism and religious mysticism, the presence of which it is difficult and not necessary to deny in the life of Spinoza, cannot in our opinion be solved by any effort to force the philosopher either into the narrow " spiritualist " or " materialist " mould. He is entirely too original for that and above all too human, and only when humanly appreciated can he be understood. It seems to me that one of Spinoza's great spiritual sons, the German poet-philosopher Johann Wolfgang Goethe, came very close to the truth about Spinoza. In his *Sprueche in Prosa*, I found this interesting comment on the relation of life to philosophy :

> " Each age of man has its corresponding philosophy. The child appears to be a realist because it is convinced of the existence of the pears and apples which it possesses. Youth, driven by inner passions must notice himself, must ' prefeel ' (Vorfuehlen) himself ; he is thus transformed into an idealist. To become a sceptical adult, man has every reason ; he does well to doubt whether the means he has chosen for a given end are the right ones ; before action and during action he has good reason to keep his mind mobile in order not to be sorry afterwards for a wrong choice. Old age will always turn to mysticism ; it perceives that much seems due to accident ; the unreasonable succeeds ; the rational fails, fortune and misfortune are unexpectedly found to be at par. So it is, so it was, and old age finds solace in that which is, which was, and which will be."

This of course is altogether a human appreciation, undoubtedly the outgrowth of the experience of a great thinker, which neither depreciates him nor his great teacher Spinoza. Neither does it deny the communist's right to claim Spinoza as one of the chief sources of their philosophy. It strikes me that our dis-

cussion has corroborated Plekhanov's saying that, " the materialism of Marx and Engels is a kind of Spinozism, though with the reservations emphasised by Socratov."

THE REFORMIST : I have been doing some research into the sources of Marxian philosophy, and this linking of Spinoza to the philosophy of dialectical materialism is rather new to me. I see its value. Nevertheless, if we concede that Marxian philosophy is a " kind of Spinozism," it is to a still higher degree a " kind of Hegelianism." Its kinship with Spinoza is rather indirect and is only now fully realized, whereas dialectic materialism, as developed by Marx and Engels, was a direct reinterpretation and continuation of Hegelianism. I think it necessary, therefore, that we should now discuss Hegel as another of the chief sources of Marxian philosophy.

THE PROFESSOR : And with Hegel we should also consider the left-wing Hegelians, particularly Feuerbach, and any other sources our friend Socratov may suggest.

THE BANKER (*draws his watch and yawns*) : I wonder how long that's going to last ?

THE SENATOR : I fear these philosophers are long-winded guys.

THE ROTARIAN (*rubbing his stomach and turning to the leader*) : That certainly is a solid meal we've got for our minds, and as far as my capacities are concerned a little too concentrated and not quite agreeable to my digestion.

THE LEADER : Ready for a cup of tea ? That's a good idea. It will help us to digest Spinoza's philosophy and get us ready for Hegel and the rest. After tea, if friend Socratov agrees, we'll continue our discussion.

DIALOGUE VI

In which the Relation of Kant and Hegel to Marxian Philosophy is demonstrated.

SOCRATOV : One of you remarked that the Marxian philosophy is a " kind of Hegelianism." Marx and Engels recognized their debt to Hegel. They considered his system of thought the culmination of the great idealist schools of philosophy. Engels says in his famous little book on Feuerbach :

> " With Hegel universal philosophy comes to an end, on the one hand because he comprehended in his system its entire development, on the greatest possible scale ; on the other hand, because he shows us the way, even though he did not know it himself, out of the labyrinth of systems to a real and positive knowledge of the world."

Here as you see, Hegel is credited with two things. First when he says, " with Hegel universal philosophy comes to an end," Engels recognizes in Hegel's system the culmination of previous philosophic thought. He means, it seems to me, that speculative philosophy as such has gone as far as it can and anyone who wants to continue philosophizing upon the idealist premises is compelled to turn back and start over again. This actually has happened in the so-called " back to Kant " movement to which we may refer later. The other thought which Engels suggests is that without knowing it, Hegel has pointed the way out of the labyrinth of speculative systems to a real and positive knowledge of the world. This latter way was recognized by Feuerbach and fully explored by Marx, Engels and many others who followed them.

THE REFORMIST : In considering Hegel the culmination of the German idealist school, could you point out more exactly how

he is related to Kant and other classical German philosophers ?

SOCRATOV : The interpretation of Hegel must begin with Kant and Kant's effort to bridle with experience the pretensions of superficial rationalists. His problem was to reach a satisfactory synthesis of the empirical world with the world of the subjective reason. To do this, he forced the understanding of experience into fixed, static, *a priori* conceptions. Sense impressions, i.e. the empirical raw material, are arranged in space and time by means of certain categories which do not exist outside the mind.

THE BANKER : Kant's teaching was always something which my mind grasped with great difficulty. Would you mind explaining his ideas a little more clearly ?

SOCRATOV : To understand Kant we must remember that he distinguished sharply between the *form* of knowledge and its empirical *content*. The form is furnished by the structure peculiar to the mind, which is a universal characteristic of all rational experience and therefore can be relied upon for the formulation of laws of science. All particular experiences are systematized in space of three dimensions and in a time series, therefore space and time are factors presupposed in every sensation and determine every empirical content. The precepts thus arranged are further organized under concepts, the so-called " categories of understanding," such as causation, dependence, limitation and others. The objective world according to Kant, is nothing but a chaos of presentations which is put in order and properly related by the intellect alone. " Thus reason does not get its laws *a priori* from nature, but prescribes them to it," concludes Kant. The object (the thing-in-itself) acts upon the subject, and the subject reacts by the production of knowledge. But this knowledge does not correspond to the " object," since in itself the object is unknowable. Only its " phenomenon," i.e. the representation which it produces in the mind, is knowable. Hence the empirical material is conditioned by the intellectual functions of the subject. Kant's criticism thus transformed the classic metaphysical and cosmic idealism into an epistomological and personal idealism.

THE HUMANIST : That clearly restates Kant, but still I don't see in which way Hegel is related to him.

SOCRATOV : The link between Kant and Hegel was Fichte. The latter felt the need to overcome the dualism between Kant's " phenomenon " and the " noumenon " or " thing-in-itself." This dualism he attempted to resolve dialectically by his " idealistic monism." In other words, he unites the objective world with the subjective world. The non-ego, i.e. the " thing-in-itself " of Kant, becomes in Fichte a part of the ego or self, outside of which nothing exists. Both object and subject are the product of the absolute ego. This " ego " of Fichte is, however, not something metaphysically static ; it is dynamic and expresses itself dialectically, and this dialectical process goes on by an inner necessity of the ego. The contradiction between the subjective ego and the objective non-ego is overcome by mutual limitation and synthesis. The dialectical idealism of Fichte, unlike the older metaphysical idealism, is thus active and creative. Another step towards Hegelian conceptions and a link connecting Hegel with Kant is to be found in the philosophy of Schelling, who reversed Fichte's emphasis by stressing the non-ego, i.e. nature, or the objective world, and then synthesising it realistically with the ego or the spirit of the absolute, which becomes conscious in the subjective experience of man.

THE PROFESSOR : You might say that in Schelling we have a return to Spinoza, for after all the non-ego of Schelling, which he also calls the absolute, is also Spinoza's God or nature.

SOCRATOV : Yet there is a difference, for Schelling's absolute is dynamic and develops dialectically. The absolute of Schelling becomes the *absolute spirit* of Hegel and in this way Fichte and Schelling, in developing the philosophy of Kant, linked him to Hegel. The " pure reason " of Kant is no longer separated by an impassable gulf from the objective world. The Kantian dualism has been overcome, and " pure reason " has become the source of knowledge and the creator of being itself. We are now prepared to understand Hegel's idea of " nature " as the estrangement of the moving " absolute

spirit." The world is a logical process at the basis of which lies the " logical idea." In this logically conditioned process each phase appears as a necessary link. The process goes on by an inner dialectical necessity. The absolute spirit is the sum total of being. Objects of experience are but attributes of thought and thought *is* being. Thought and being are the same. Things are transformed into thought and thus the subjective and objective merge into " transcendental thought," which is the essence of the Universe. The form in which thought is manifested is a logical concept. Transcendental thought thinks itself as a logical concept, which *develops progressively by means of inner contradictions.* This is the essence of the dialectical method of Hegel. The dialectical process through which Fichte's " ego " passes takes place equally in the " absolute spirit " of Hegel, only with this difference, that the latter is an objective real essence of the world process existing independent of consciousness.

THE HUMANIST : You have stated Hegel's ideas admirably, but I am still at a loss to see where it connects with Marxism. It seems to me that Hegel is entirely too theological to be of any use to a materialistic philosophy.

SOCRATOV : Superficially that is true, but Hegel stripped of his speculative theological wrappings is easy enough to recognize as a dialectical materialist. The absolute spirit of Hegel reappears in Marxian thought simply as " nature " or " matter " and Engels justly calls Hegelianism, " materialism turned upside down." The dialectic movement of the absolute spirit is the story of the development of thought. Applied to nature and man, it is the story of the evolution of the world and of society in all its aspects. To understand the dialectical process and apply it to facts scientifically established is to possess oneself of a *universal method* not only of understanding the past, but also of predicting the proximate future and directing it at will.

THE PROFESSOR : May we conclude then, that the important and lasting contribution of Hegel as understood by Marxians is not only his hypothesis of the absolute spirit, which in con-

tent differs little from Spinoza's God or nature, but the fact that Hegel developed in his " dialectics " or " logic," the laws of the movements of the absolute spirit. These laws when stripped of their mystic apparel, reveal themselves as the laws of the movement of nature, and become the essence of the philosophy of dialectical materialism.

SOCRATOV : That's the essential thought. Marx had the courage to declare himself a Hegelian when German philosophers were declaring that the old master was " a dead dog." In his introduction to the second edition of *Capital* Marx refers to that period, and says :

> " I therefore openly declared myself a pupil of this great thinker and in the chapter on the theory of values even flirted somewhat with Hegelianism, using here and there his characteristic terminology. The mystification which dialectics suffered at the hands of Hegel, by no means alters the fact that it was Hegel who first gave an exhaustive and conscientious picture of its general forms of movement. With Hegel, dialectics stands on its head ; it is necessary to put it on its feet in order to unfold the rational kernel under its mystical husk."

THE HUMANIST : Strange that a century after the death of Hegel this " dead dog " comes back to life not only in your revolutionary philosophy but, as I learned from my contacts in Germany before coming here, also in Western philosophy ! What are the reasons for this strange revival of Hegelianism ?

SOCRATOV : In recent years the Western world has revived Hegelianism for several good reasons. These are, to my mind, first, because of the severe crises through which bourgeois science is passing. The old methods and axioms of science are no longer tenable. This is not only the case in the natural sciences, physics, chemistry, and biology, but equally in the social sciences. Hence, there is a cry for a " new logic," a " new table of categories," a " new philosophy." In this crisis some of the more thoughtful and intelligent men have returned to Hegel, whose dialectics lends itself to the methodological demands of modern science.

THE HUMANIST : I never expected to turn from Mill, Spencer, Pierson and the other empiricists back to the old dialectician Hegel.

SOCRATOV : Another reason for the revival of Hegelianism is the world crisis of capitalism, in the wake of which fascism has followed as the last resort for stabilization. In search of a philosophy, the religiously tainted fascistic bourgeoisie turned to the absolute idealism of Hegel—to use it as the philosophy of its aggressive tactics. This is the case at present in Germany. In his day Hegel sanctioned by his philosophy of the " absolute spirit " the nationalism and chauvinism of the Prussian monarchy. The fascist movement of Germany is now emphasizing this national chauvinism, finding in Hegel its philosophical justification. We find a similar adaptation of Hegel in the Italian fascist movement, sponsored by the Italian fascist philosopher Gentile. He emphasizes the dialectics of the actively thinking individual, and produces an idealist subjectivism suitable to Italian fascism. Hegel is also adapted to the needs of social democracy in a movement calling itself " critical dialectics," which is an effort to synthesize Hegel with Kant. The social democrat, Siegfried Mark, professor at the University of Breslau, is its principal exponent. Finally, there is the " tragic dialectics " of Arthur Liebert, exposing the hopelessness and the tragic decline of the bourgeois social order. He shows " the impossible antagonism of actuality," " the dissonances of life," " the actual contradictions in the chaos of being." His is, in short, the dialectics of tragedy. This philosophic chaos in the West corroborates what Lenin wrote in 1908 :

> " The nearer capitalistic society is to its end, the more the proletarian revolution knocks at its gates, the more reactionary becomes bourgeois philosophy."

THE SENATOR : If the revival of Hegelian philosophy is a sign of decline, then thank God we haven't suffered from it in our country.

THE ROTARIAN : No, but there has been a general revival of philosophy among the American people. Just think that Will

Durant's *Story of Philosophy* has been a " best seller " for some time.

THE BANKER : I didn't spend as many hours on philosophy during my college years as I have during these last few days in Moscow. I wonder whether I'm also on the decline.

THE REFORMIST : I believe our friends here have been labouring under one difficulty which so far Comrade Socratov has failed to remove. He has mentioned many times that Marx adapted and developed Hegel's dialectics, but he has said very little of what his dialectics represents.

SOCRATOV : Quite right. I'll try briefly to re-state Hegel's dialectics as understood by Marx and Engels, following as much as possible their own interpretation. I may add that Engels in his *Ludwig Feuerbach* is very explicit. To sum up his argument, he shows that in Hegel's system the entire world both of natural history and of intelligence was presented as a process, i.e. in perpetual motion, transformation, and development. Dialectics is the *self-development* of the *concept*. According to Hegel the absolute concept existed—no one knows where—from the beginning of time, and composed the true life-giving soul of all beings. It develops by itself, passing through all the stages which are contained within it, and which are developed in detail in his " logic." Then it estranges itself, appearing in nature, where it develops anew, but unconsciously, assuming the guise of natural necessity. In man it again becomes conscious, and in history this self-consciousness again proceeds upwards from the bottom until the absolute concept finally returns to itself. The dialectical development reveals itself in nature and in history, as the relation of cause and effect in the progressive movement which, in spite of deviations and retreats is advancing from the lowest to the highest. This development appears in Hegel as a simple image of the progressive movement of the concept, which is an unconditioned, eternal process taking place no one knows where, but in any case altogether independent of man's brain.

THE HUMANIST : We are accustomed to think in terms of

evolution and this dialectic process described by Hegel could be interpreted in the language of the modern evolutionist and so made much more accessible to the modern mind.

SOCRATOV: This was done by Marx and Engels. They stripped Hegel of his mystical garments. Instead of dealing with the mysteries of the "absolute spirit," they applied his progressive logic to a tangible world. So Engels writes:

> "We conceived of ideas as materialistic, as pictures of real things, instead of real things as pictures of this or that stage of the absolute idea. Thereupon the dialectic became reduced to knowledge of the universal laws of motion—of the outer world as well as of the thought of man—two sets of laws which are identical as far as matter is concerned, but which differ as regards expression in so far as the mind of man can employ them consciously while in nature and up to now, in human history, for the most part they accomplished themselves, unconsciously in the form of external necessity, through an endless succession of apparent accidents. Hereupon the dialectics of the idea became itself merely the conscious reflex of the dialectic evolution of the real world, and therefore the dialectic of Hegel was turned upside down, or rather it was placed upon its feet instead of its head, where it was standing before."

Hegel's system, you can see, was strictly deterministic, reflecting the forms of the development of nature, and essentially it was a logical abstraction of the material world, although idealistically expressed. This fact was clearly understood by Marx and Engels and therefore they were prepared to evaluate Hegel in terms of materialist dialectics.

THE PROFESSOR: Before we go on, I'd like to summarize our discussion about the chief sources of dialectical materialism. We have seen that it contains elements from Spinoza, such as his idea of substance or "matter," emphasizing mind and extension, the qualitative and the quantitative, as real and inseparable attributes of nature, existing outside and independent of consciousness. This matter means nature, which

acts upon the senses and calls forth perception. It does not mean that it must be tangible matter as popularly understood. Matter is rather, as you said Lenin put it, "a philosophic category for designating objective reality." Hence any change or new discovery bearing on the nature of matter may be accepted so long as its objective existence is not denied. We have also seen that dialectical materialism is a direct continuation of the Hegelian dialectical method in the study of nature and man, but unlike Hegel, who remained a captive of traditional idealism, we understand it realistically or materialistically. While containing these elements from Spinoza and Hegel, it is not in my opinion an eclectic philosophy. It appears to conciliate and unite in a higher philosophic synthesis a long line of older philosophic movements, growing out of these old systems into a new philosophy. We might even say that philosophy itself follows the dialectic process. There is continuity and there are breaks. There is a new quality in dialectical materialism which differentiates it from the dialectics of Hegel and from all the other systems which preceded it.

THE REFORMIST: May I also suggest that before proceeding any further, you might help us by pointing out just how the intricate pattern of Hegel's philosophic thought could become the weapon of an aggressive revolutionary theory in the hands of Marx and Engels.

SOCRATOV: In the first place we must remember that metaphysical thought, unlike the dialectical philosophy of Hegel, proceeds from the premise that nature is always a unit in itself, moving in closed cycles and in steady equilibrium like the heavenly bodies. By analogy these ideals were applied to the organic world and to human history. Kant insists that there cannot be inherent contradictions in the workings of mind, and if any such appear they must be due to the phenomenal character of the world we know. The ingenious mind of Kant was unable to overcome its dualism, because he insisted upon his principle that *contradictions in the concepts of things are impossible.* Quite contrary was the basic principle

of Hegel's dialectic logic. He does not try to reason *contradiction* out of existence. He recognizes it as the dynamic of the cosmic and historical process. *Contradiction leads forward.* This is the revolutionary doctrine of Hegel which was rediscovered and brilliantly applied to history by Marx and Engels. " Contradiction," says Hegel, " is what actually moves the world, and it is ridiculous to say that contradictions cannot be thought. In this connection the contention is, however, true, that the matter cannot rest with a contradiction, and that it (the contradiction) is removed through itself." This central idea of Hegel's dialectical logic, without his knowledge or expectation, became the revolutionary weapon of his revolting pupils, first of Feuerbach, then of Marx, Engels, and many of their followers. Since we have mentioned Feuerbach it may be proper to point out at this juncture the part he played in preparing Marx and Engels for their revolutionary career in philosophy. The part played by Feuerbach in this is very significant and calls for a much more detailed analysis of his teaching than would otherwise be warranted in such a discussion.

THE HUMANIST: I am getting more and more interested in this Feuerbach whom as I told you, we in America have altogether forgotten.

THE BANKER: I never thought that philosophy was work. I'm tired. This double dose of philosophy we have had to-day is more than enough for me.

THE ROTARIAN: There is going to be a special Athletic Exhibition at the Park of Culture and Rest, to-night. Since I am a member of the committee for the organization of the World Olympic Games, which are to be held in our country next year, I suggest that we go to the park to see the exhibition. It's possible that we'll invite the Soviet athletes to participate in the next contest.

THE SENATOR: A good idea! Philosophy in an armchair, no doubt, is noble, but I'd rather be in the grand stand watching Babe Ruth.

THE LEADER: We agree then to adjourn and continue our discussion to-morrow after lunch.

DIALOGUE VII

In which the Relation of Marx to Feuerbach and the English and French Materialists is discussed.

(On this occasion the Banker was absent.)

THE LEADER: Some of you wanted to hear a little more about Feuerbach's contribution to Marxian, and therefore to communist philosophy.

SOCRATOV: To appreciate Feuerbach and the movement which he headed, we must first remember that during the forties of the last century there was a widespread interest in Hegelianism. In Germany, Russia and other countries, conservatives, liberals and radicals all found food for thought in the rich heritage of Hegel's intellect. In Germany the radicals in the movement were known as the young Hegelians. They developed radical ideas in philosophic disguise, and their criticism was chiefly directed against religion, though it was also indirectly an attack upon Prussian autocracy and paved the way for the revolution of 1848. From the ranks of the young Hegelians came Ludwig Feuerbach, author of *Das Wesen des Christentums* (The Essence of Christianity). In this brilliant treatise, born of deep religious emotion, Christianity was brought to earth, and a frank religious humanism or materialism was advocated. Its central theme was that all religious values, including God, are human values to which a supernatural sanction has been attached by human imagination. Man is not the image of God; God is the image of man. Thus there is nothing outside of nature and man. Philosophy should begin, not with "I," but with "I and YOU." Nature is the basis of spirit and therefore should also be the basis of philosophy.

THE HUMANIST: Feuerbach was quite a modernist for his

time. Some of our humanists speak in the same terms to-day, almost a century after him.

SOCRATOV : If this language seems revolutionary to you, you may imagine what effect it had a century ago in conservative Germany. And here lies the great historic significance of Feuerbach. He broke the spell of the old Hegelian system and signalled an open revolt. In his reminiscences of this time, Engels says, " One must have oneself experienced the delivering power of this book to get a clear idea of it. The enthusiasm was universal ; we were all, for the moment, followers of Feuerbach." In this manner Feuerbach prepared the way for a revaluation of Hegel, and for the making of the new materialism which was the direct antithesis of Hegel's idealism. Feuerbach's new materialism was directed towards the study of the material world with man as its integral part, and thus the old dualism between mind and matter and the problem of interaction was brushed aside as sterile scholasticism. Commenting on this question, he says :

> " For the former abstract philosophy, the characteristic question was how many various independent beings or substances act upon one another. . . . But this problem was insoluble for a philosophy which abstracted from the senses, and the substances which were to act one upon the other, were abstract entities created by reason. . . . Being is not a general concept separable from things. It coincides with that which is."

THE PROFESSOR : It seems to me that in this intricate problem of knowing the real world, Feuerbach adapted practical methods.

SOCRATOV : His criterion was that by practice man must prove the truth of reasoning, i.e. prove that it has an actual force and does not terminate this side of phenomena. Feuerbach revolted against Hegelian idealism, of which he was a thorough student ; yet in rejecting idealism he equally refused to be identified with the older French materialism, which he severely criticised. " French materialism," he says, " is nothing but old metaphysics presented as physics."

THE HUMANIST : Very well said.

SOCRATOV: For this reason, Feuerbach wanted to throw overboard even the term materialism, because it seemed to him to suggest false conceptions. He prefers to use the term *organism*, since, says he, " for us exists only organic life, organic activity, organic thinking," whereas the spiritualist philosophy " denies that thinking is in need of an organ." Feuerbach does not deny that his system is materialistic, but he wants to have it understood that it is different from that of the classical materialists. " Materialism for me," he says, " is the foundation of the building of the being and knowledge of man, but it is not for me what it is for the physiologists in the narrow sense, as with Moleschott, for example, since necessarily from their standpoint it is the building itself. Backwards I am in accord with the naturalists, but not forwards."

THE HUMANIST: I suppose by this " backwards " he means that organically man is a part of nature, but in his conscious forward-looking state, he becomes a new quality. This you probably would term the dialectic movement in the change from quantity to quality. I consider this quite an acceptable theory. The reason why so many of us do not accept this philosophy is because we don't like the term " materialism." It is a pity that Feuerbach's wish to call it by a different term was not adapted by his followers, particularly Marx and Engels. After all what is there in common between the old French materialism and the ideas expressed in your dialectics. I would have preferred to call it " dialectical historicism " or " dialectical naturalism " or something of that sort.

THE PROFESSOR: I call this " logo-phobia," this fear and prejudice about words. It is a common disease. Why do we not give up the term God or religion? You yourself told us that you have long since given up the religion of your fathers with its concept of God, and yet you are not prepared to give up the word God. To my mind the justification for this conservatism in terminology lies in the fact that words represent not only a concept, but equally the history of an idea. To the old term God we may easily attach the whole process which produced our ideas of the sublime and the

supernatural. The same is true of the term materialism. While there is an enormous difference between the materialism of Democritus, of Hobbes and of Feuerbach, and still more of Marx and Lenin, the word reminds us of the continuity in the development of the naturalist instead of the supernaturalist concept of being. Therefore it seems to me wise to retain the old terminology on both sides.

SOCRATOV: "Logo-phobia?" I had not given a thought to it. It is a common disease in our ranks also. In connection with Feuerbach we must emphasize, at any rate, that he was an *organic* not a *mechanistic* materialist. In this consists his chief difference from the older French mechanistic materialism which flourished in the age of "physics," and knew little of the biological sciences. Feuerbach, however, felt the force of the new sciences, and his idea of the new philosophy was that it should be based on the natural sciences and bridge the gulf between the material and the social or "spiritual" sciences. (This terminology was still adhered to by Feuerbach.) We do not wrong him, however, if we call Feuerbach, against his wish, a materialist, for historically he became the forerunner of modern organic materialism. He was a materialist because he recognized the priority of "nature" over "spirit," and considered "nature" or the objective world as real, existing independent of man's consciousness, man himself being a part of nature and controlled by the same laws as those which govern the processes of nature. Feuerbach was a militant, prophetic, flaming revolutionary philosopher, and as such he inspired revolutionary youth to action. His militant spirit broke the bonds which chained philosophy to theology and prepared the way for a new and higher synthesis which was accomplished after him by the Marxian dialectical materialist philosophy.

THE REFORMIST: On what points did Marx and Engels deviate from Feuerbach and travel their own way?

SOCRATOV: Feuerbach was a modern materialist, but still he was unable to raise materialism to its dialectical stage. Having broken away from the old theological conceptions, he failed

to develop his anthropological principles. He ignored the actual environment of man which so greatly determines his behaviour. He deified man and his love-life, and here Marx and Engels were unwilling to follow him. " He does not wish to abolish religion by any means," complains Engels, " He wants to perfect it. Philosophy itself will be absorbed in religion." Marx, on the contrary, welcomes religious criticism as a presupposition of every other criticism. " The criticism of religion turns into criticism of law ; the criticism of theology becomes the criticism of politics." To Feuerbach, " The periods of human progress are only distinguishable by religious changes. There is only a real historical progress where it enters the hearts of men." In his thesis on Feuerbach, Marx develops his criticism of this idea. In his seventh thesis he says : " Therefore, Feuerbach does not see that the ' religious emotion ' is in itself a social product, and that the abstract individual, which he subjects to analysis, belongs to a definite social form." Feuerbach started a new line of thought when he transformed theology into anthropology, but he soon stepped aside from this new and promising path and reverted to abstractions. Marx and Engels, however, remained and continued as pioneers upon the new way. They did not follow Feuerbach back to the world of shadows, from which he had helped them to escape. " The step which Feuerbach did not make," says Engels, " had not yet been made. The cultus of man in the abstract which was the kernel of Feuerbach's religion, must be replaced by the knowledge of real man and his historical development. Within these limits, we must look for the influence of Feuerbach upon Marx and Engels.

THE PROFESSOR: Though Feuerbach did not go the whole way toward the conception of modern materialism, which was only achieved later by the genius of Marx, we should not underestimate his importance. He is undoubtedly a direct link between Hegelianism and Marxism, and one of the makers of that revolutionary philosophy which so militantly inspires the communist movement.

THE REFORMIST : As a student of Marxism, it seems to me that we have not been giving due consideration to the influence which the older English and French materialism had on the development of dialectical materialism. Our study of sources, to my mind, should terminate with an analysis of the older materialists and show their relation to Marxism.

THE HUMANIST : A good idea, provided our friend Socratov is ready to take up the subject.

SOCRATOV : This is not an alien question to me. It has been frequently raised among our philosophers. It is of particular importance to Russia because, as you remember, French materialism was introduced to Russia in the person of Denis Diderot at the very dawn of revolutionary thinking in our country, and has since remained an integral part of our intellectual revolutionary heritage. Marx and Engels were, of course, thoroughly at home in the history of the older materialism. Marx, so to speak, was brought up on French encyclopedists, and Diderot was his favourite prose author.

THE ROTARIAN : Who were his favourite poets ?

SOCRATOV : A curious little document called *My Confessions*, written by Marx and published for the first time by Ryasonov is the answer to a questionnaire which one of Marx's daughters once jokingly put before him. It begins : " What is your favourite dish ? " Marx wrote, " fish." He took the matter humorously. Nevertheless, when he answered " Diderot " to the question " Who is your favourite prose author," and " Shakespeare, Aeschylus and Goethe " to " Who are your favourite poets ? " his answers were serious.

THE HUMANIST : Not bad taste, by any means !

SOCRATOV : In *The Holy Family*, one of his earlier books, he makes a masterly analysis of the sources of French materialism and its relation to the rise of the socialist and communist movements. He calls materialism " a son of Great Britain," and traces it from Duns Scotus, who raised the question, " Can matter think ? " and made " theology preach materialism," through Bacon, Hobbes, Locke, Collins, Hartley, Priestly and others. The French materialism of the seven-

teenth century, particularly of Lamettrie and Holbach, is according to Marx a synthesis of the British materialism as presented by Locke with the older French materialism originating in Descartes' physics. Descartes *Animal Machine* reappears in Lamettries' *The Man Machine*. In Helvetius and particularly in Diderot the influence of Spinoza and Leibniz is also felt. French materialism has two trends, one Cartesian, diverted to the natural sciences, and the other moving to socialism and communism. This development Marx seems to be due to the national traits of the French, who " gave to English materialism flesh and blood, wit and eloquence. They gave it temperament and grace. They *civilized* it."

THE REFORMIST : Would you consider then, that English and French materialism stimulated the founders of Marxism rather than provided them with positive ideas ?

SOCRATOV : You may put it that way. Both Marx and Engels were conscious of the limitations of the older materialism. " First, at that time," says Engels, " of all the natural sciences, the mechanics of gravity . . . alone had reached any definite conclusions. Secondly, French materialism in general was incapable of representing the universe as a process, as one form of matter assumed in the course of evolutionary development." In short it was metaphysical and static. Diderot was an exception in this respect. Though the least systematic and dogmatic, he was the most profound of them all and far transcended the knowledge and the limitations of his time. He made brilliant suggestions about the origin of species which almost a century later were developed and demonstrated by Darwin. He also showed a profound understanding of the dialectics of nature. He says : " Everything changes, everything disappears, only the whole remains." His conception of matter or substance was adopted from Spinoza. In this view matter is potentially life, its degree of vitality depending on its organization. Diderot also made a profound analysis of the society of his time and in his posthumous work, *The Nephew of Ramo*, depicted the decadence of the pre-revolutionary ruling class of France. Hegel

commented on this book, showing how every class bears within itself the germs of its own destruction when its existence proves no longer necessary to history. The French could not but apply materialism socially; "if human character," they reasoned, "is created by environment, then this environment must be worthy of it. If nature destined man for social life, then only in society does he reveal his genuine nature."

THE PROFESSOR: You showed us how English materialism crossed the channel and influenced the French, but isn't it equally true that the French Revolution reacted upon British thought.

SOCRATOV: The French social interpretation of materialism undoubtedly influenced Owen, the founder of English utopian socialism. Owen in his turn influenced Marx and Engels, especially in the earlier stage of their development. Finally, they overcame and superseded both English and French materialism and socialism. They considered these outgrown and overcome by dialectical materialism, which alone makes socialism scientific. While Marx and Engels overcame French materialism with the aid of Hegel and Feuerbach, this cannot be said of many socialists in Latin countries and in pre-revolutionary Russia. Even to this day we feel its influence among some of our thinkers.

THE REFORMIST: What are the reasons for this backwardness?

SOCRATOV: The French materialists, for one thing, are so much more readable and acceptable than the heavy works of Hegel and Marx. Besides, their brilliant, daring, anti-religious and anti-feudal attacks give them a much more flaring revolutionary appearance than the apparently pious Hegelian writings or the cool reasoning of Marx. If we trace the history of socialist thought, we shall find that French materialism continues to rival dialectical materialism and proves to be a cause of severe inner philosophic struggles. This is the case also in our communist movement where it shows itself in the struggle between the mechanists and the dialecticians. All efforts to find a synthesis between these two

methods or trends of thought is to my mind futile. There is no organic affinity between them, and in spite of the brilliant features that French materialism contains, it is destined to be relegated to the archives of history together with the class, the bourgeoisie, which produced it.

THE PROFESSOR: I wonder if all of our friends have read any of Marx, who as we see hold such an important place in communist thought?

THE SENATOR: I've never read a line of him. In our country he is considered an enemy to democratic thought.

THE ROTARIAN: One of my communist friends in Moscow, whom I tried to interest in the rotarian movement, gave me a copy of the communist manifesto, but to tell the truth, I haven't read it. I gave it to the Banker. He promised to read it this morning instead of coming here. These discussions tire him, he says.

THE LEADER: May I conclude then that you wish to hear a restatement of the contributions of Marx and Engels to communist philosophy?

THE REFORMIST: We can never get too much of Marx. We should commence with him to-morrow.

DIALOGUE VIII

In which the Place of Marx and Engels in Communist Philosophy is discussed.

(*The Banker has rejoined the group.*)

THE PROFESSOR: Our study of the sources of the Marxian philosophy has shown us that the rich heritage of ancient and modern philosophy, including both naturalistic and idealistic systems of thought had come to focus and been synthesized in the minds of Marx and Engels. This synthesis, which is now known as Marxism, has become the basis for further development in contemporary communist philosophy.

SOCRATOV: In order fully to appreciate the contribution of Marx and Engels to modern revolutionary philosophy, it may be helpful to point out how these two minds supplemented one another and how their work was made possible by their mutual friendship and co-operation. There's hardly another example in history of two great minds working together to such a degree that it becomes difficult to separate them and to point out just which of the ideas presented belongs to one or the other.

THE ROTARIAN: A veritable David and Jonathan!

SOCRATOV: If we consider the background of the two men, we find that they came from entirely different family and social environments. Karl Marx, born in 1818 in the Rhine province, had the advantage of a philosophical home atmosphere. His father, a liberal lawyer, was very fond of the French encyclopaedists and the materialistic philosophers of the French Revolution. This prepared him to sever himself from the faith of his people. Karl Marx's grandfather was a Jewish Rabbi, but his father became a nominal protestant.

Naturally there could be no rigid religious tradition in such a home, and from early childhood Marx enjoyed a liberal education and an atmosphere which saved him from the tragedy of breaking family ties and religious traditions. Very different was the background of Engels. Born in 1820, also in the Rhine province, he was the son of a rich merchant who was fanatically religious, pietistic and puritanical in habit and wholly unable to appreciate the liberal thought that was coming from across the Rhine and capturing the young German intellectuals. At the age of seventeen, under the influence of the liberal criticism of the young Hegelians, Engels drifted away from the faith of his father and was never again reconciled to it.

THE REFORMIST: Does not this latter fact explain the bitterness of Engels towards religion, which is quite alien to Marx, who viewed it much more objectively and rationally?

SOCRATOV: There may be something in this, but on the other hand, it was also the philosophical and political atmosphere in Germany which contributed to Engel's radicalism. Hegelian philosophy, as we know, had become definitely differentiated into two opposite trends: one, ultra-conservative, basing its defence of reaction upon the first part of Hegel's famous thesis, "All that is real is reasonable," the other, the progressive or young Hegelians emphasizing the second part of this thesis, "All that is reasonable is real." "The attribute of reality belongs only to that which is at the same time necessary," wrote Engels in his *Ludwig Feuerbach*, and showed how the Hegelian dialectic turned into its opposite, and demonstrated how "all that is real in the course of human history becomes in the process of time irrational."

THE SENATOR: Do you mean to say that our democracy and constitutional government can ever become irrational?

SOCRATOV: I believe it has already become irrational. Your constitution, which was devised for a pioneering individualistic civilization, is now a handicap to social progress. Progress calls for much social legislation which under the present constitution is frequently declared unconstitutional by your

supreme court. But let's return to Marx. For his historic mission he was thoroughly prepared by a detailed study of the history of philosophy. His doctor's thesis was devoted to a comparative study of the ancient materialists, Democritus and Epicurus, showing the difference in their philosophy of nature. While showing ability of analysis and considerable erudition in the field of ancient philosophy, this first work of Marx remains within the limits of the accepted idealist school with its philosophy of self-consciousness. But soon afterwards in 1843, under the influence of Feuerbach, he and Engels both accepted realistic humanism. At this time, he made his famous remark, addressed to the adherents of speculative philosophy: "There is no other way for you to get to truth and liberty except through the firebrook. The firebrook is the purgatory of the present."

THE PROFESSOR: By "the firebrook" Marx means the philosopher Feuerbach. His name is the German word for "firebrook."

SOCRATOV: Inflamed by the new knowledge they had gained, Marx and Engels, in their book entitled *The Holy Family*, jointly launched a scorching criticism of speculative philosophy against Bruno Bauer & Co. It is based upon the anthropological and humanistic principles which they accepted from Feuerbach, who had first applied them to the analysis of religion. In the *Holy Family* they carry the Feuerbachian principles over into the sphere of society with its laws, customs, morals, government and production. On the other hand Bauer & Co. cloak these principles with the old Hegelian speculative idealism which, instead of dealing with real human individuals, revelled in "self-consciousness" and "spirit." In this guise they proved to be the most reactionary and dangerous enemies of realistic humanism. *The Holy Family* is interesting as showing the transition of Marx and Engels from Hegelian speculative philosophy to dialectic materialism through Feuerbachian humanism. Feuerbach was the first to expose the reactionary nature of speculative philosophy. He showed them that according to Hegel truth is autocratic

and self-proving ; mind merely follows and becomes conscious of truth when its process is completed. In this process the philosopher does not direct or create truth ; he is simply the mouthpiece of the absolute spirit which reveals itself in history. Besides, the philosopher does not announce the approaching truth ; he is not a prophet ; he is only retrospection becoming conscious of truth *post facto*. Marx and Engels revolted against this sterile philosophy and declared that " To accomplish ideas human beings are necessary who must use practical force." They pointed to French revolutionary philosophy, to the French and English socialist and communist movements which demonstrated in practise what Feuerbach had advanced in theory. In these movements, they said, " materialism coincides with humanism."

THE HUMANIST : This is a real revelation to me, that Marx passed from humanist philosophy to what you call dialectical materialism.

THE REFORMIST : It goes to show that humanism is only a transitional stage and must not stop short in its progress towards Marxism.

SOCRATOV : Marxism presupposes that man gets his knowledge with the aid of his senses from the natural world which he can control. If, in the materialist sense, man is in so far unfree and determined that he cannot escape the natural order and must positively express his strength and reveal his true nature in action ; if his character and his behaviour are determined by environment, then he may change his surroundings to make them worthy of humanity. " If man," says Marx, " according to his nature is a social being, then only in society can he develop his true nature. Hence he must be judged by this force of his nature ; not as a single individual but as an entire society." These were the conclusions at which Marx and Engels arrived in their *Holy Family*. While they recognized that man was a part of nature, they saw that for this very reason he was also to be the agent for the control of nature. Slowly they begin to extricate themselves from humanism, and to prepare the way

for dialectical materialism. We must not think that this was a simple process. The natural reaction would have been to swing over from the sterility of speculative idealism to French and English materialism as did Buechner, Moleschott and their school. The minds of Marx and Engels were too profound to accept the shallow philosophy of the latter. The genius of Hegel and the rich heritage of the classic German idealism of Kant, Fichte and Schelling could not lightly be brushed aside. It had to be conquered and overpowered by a higher synthesis of philosophic thought. Marx alone, seconded by Engels, seemed to be able to accomplish this Herculean task. Thus we see them undertaking the difficult operation of taking Hegel's system, which was standing on its head, and setting it on its feet. This inevitably led them to break with Feuerbach, who got no farther than an abstract, introspective materialism, whereas Marx and Engels sought a philosophy which emphasized the equal historicity and dialectics of nature, mind and society. At this stage, Marx also recognized the revolutionary implications of his philosophy. In his last thesis on Feuerbach he says, " Philosophers have only *explained* the world in different ways ; the task is to *change* it."

THE HUMANIST : What other philosophical works besides the *Holy Family* do you consider important for the understanding of his development ?

SOCRATOV : His *German Ideology*, to my mind, develops the newly grasped philosophical ideas and forecasts a magnificent synthesis of thought and action, conceiving it as an unbroken historic process. He arrives at the conclusion that : " We know but one single science, the science of history. . . . As long as man shall exist the history of nature and the history of man will condition each other. . . . Ideology itself is but one of the aspects of this history." An exposition of the same views may be found in his criticism of Proudhon's idealistic notions of the *Philosophy of Poverty*, which in his criticism Marx called the *Poverty of Philosophy*.

THE PROFESSOR : We may conclude, then, from the dis-

cussion so far, that Marx grasped the important truth that history is a process, that all the phenomena of nature, including man and society, are interrelated, that nothing is permanent, that everything moves and continually changes. It is quite natural, therefore, to suppose that if there is such a continuity, this universal process must have its laws. Would it not be in order to ask " What are the laws of this historical evolution which Marx and Engels formulated from their analysis of universal phenomena ? "

SOCRATOV : To answer your question intelligently, we must pause a moment to remind ourselves of the materials which were at the disposal of Marx and Engels. To begin with, there was the work of the French materialists, of English empiricism, of Feuerbach's humanism, and of Hegel's dialectics. French materialism was not satisfactory. At its best it conceived the world as composed of mechanically moving closed cycles which left no place for creative thought. English empiricism had contributed much to the study of facts, but it was agnostic and denied the possibility of real and full knowledge of the world. Feuerbach, though he took a definite step in the right direction, was nevertheless unable to rid himself of idealistic abstractions. Hegel, however, in spite of his other-worldliness, had discovered, it seemed to Marx, the clue to the mastery of the universe, and he soon convinced himself that the dialectic laws of Hegel are something more than the laws of the evolution of the " absolute spirit of the universe," that they are, in fact, the laws of the evolution of the real universe, of nature, man, society, and of the workings of man's mind itself. In analyzing Hegel, Marx found that his system contained three elements, Spinoza's substance, Fichte's self-consciousness, and the necessarily contradictory Hegelian unity of the two—the " absolute spirit." The first element is the metaphysical inversion of nature as it is torn away from man ; the second is the metaphysical inversion of spirit as it is torn away from nature ; the third is the metaphysical inversion of the unity of the two, actual nature and actual mankind. True enough,

Hegel felt the artificiality of his abstractions and even dared to say that " Theism and materialism represent two aspects of *one and the same basic principle* . . . the difference is not in the thing itself, but only in the various starting points of both constructions."

THE HUMANIST : Where does he say that ?

SOCRATOV : In his *Phenomenology*. Marx quotes him in his *Holy Family*. The profound truth of this statement is best illustrated in the Marxian system. In turning Hegel upside down, in reversing his starting point, that is, in commencing not with the abstract, " absolute spirit," but with concrete tangible nature and man, his dialectics worked just as well and provided the necessary method for deriving the general laws of evolution. The whole matter seems so simple, as simple as the story of Columbus' egg, and yet it was a great revolutionary achievement of which its authors might be justly proud. " Marx and I," wrote Engels, " were the only ones who saved from the German idealist philosophy the conscious dialectic, transforming it into a materialistic conception of nature and history." So highly did Marx and Engels value Hegelian dialectics that they recognized it to be " the last word in philosophy," only needing to be freed from its mystical husk.

THE BANKER : I tried to dip into Marx yesterday. I don't find him as simple as that.

SOCRATOV : The difficulty lies in the obscure unusual language which these writers used and which it is rather difficult to translate into English. Take, for example, Hegel and his laws of dialectics. In his language the " spirit," the " idea," does not remain static, resting in the *thesis*. On the contrary this thesis, this thought, is counterposing itself, dividing itself into its opposite thought. The " yeas " become " nays." The struggle of these two is reflected in the *antithesis*, but in the process of the struggle which Hegel called the *dialectic*, a third element is formed from the interpenetration of the opposites, resulting in a synthesis, which is more than a reversion to the old. A cycle has been completed, but it is

not a closed circle, but a spiral, which rises above its starting point. The new synthesis, however, is not final either; it, too, contains the germs of its own negationand thus t he, process continues without end. What we call history was to Hegel only the image of this dialectical process of the "absolute spirit," and though its reflections are true, they are not real. Marx reverses this. It is not the idea which is reflected in being, but it is being which is reflected in the ideas of man.

THE HUMANIST: And what is the evidence for this doctrine?

SOCRATOV: Astronomically and geologically speaking, there was a time when being had no consciousness, although, potentially, consciousness was present. Therefore Marx's conclusion was that being or matter is primary and consciousness is derivative, although it is not the same as matter. To claim that it is the same would be to revert to the old mechanistic materialism. The difference between the dialectical idealists and the dialectic materialists has been explicitly stated by Engels. "The question," he says, "what is at the beginning, spirit or nature, this question was, in spite of the church, now cut down to this: 'Has God made the world or is the world from eternity?' The one party which placed the origin (of spirit) before that of nature . . . made the camp of idealism, the others who recognized nature as the source, belong to the various schools of materialism."

THE HUMANIST: But this is an antiquated view. None of us believes any more in an anthropomorphic God making the world. What we insist is that the essence or the organizing force of nature is, if you don't mind the word, spiritual or moral. The spiritual essence works itself out in nature and becomes conscious in man. I believe it is rather naïve to ask, "Which came first, spirit or matter?" There is no first and no second so far as eternity is concerned. If it were otherwise, there would be no eternity. To me all this talk is about as useless as the old sophistic question, which came first, the chicken or the egg? Of course I do not deny that

so far as our planet is concerned, and so far as we can observe the formation of heavenly bodies, the priority in time belongs to the unconscious. Many geological ages had gone before the appearance of life, but potentially it was always there; otherwise, where did life come from? I am not one of those who think that it existed somewhere independent of nature, and came to the world in rays of light or in some other way. To hold such an idea is to expose oneself to all the difficulties of a dualistic philosophy. Our views are monistic, and I think we have a greater claim to Spinoza, Kant, Fichte and Hegel than any materialist. If the sources of your philosophy are traced to these great minds, then it is rather a misnomer to call yourselves materialists. A thing does not change essentially if you turn it from its head to its feet. It simply appears as something different. Essentially it is the same thing. So far as I can see, the difference between modern idealists, as we call ourselves and a modern dialectical materialist is not very great. It is rather in the application of philosophy than in philosophy itself that we differ.

SOCRATOV: Your comments corroborate the hypothesis that philosophic systems are subject to the dialectical process, that they are in a continuous movement, that they interpenetrate almost to the point of losing their identity, and again separate and, so to say, become conscious of their differences. And in times of acceleration and intensification of the class struggle, they fall in line with the social movement, and take sides in the struggle. We communists are quite conscious of the class struggle on the idealogical front. You may be interested to know that Engels understood the dialectics of philosophic systems. He says in his *Ludwig Feuerbach*: "Idealistic systems filled themselves more and more with materialistic content and sought to reconcile the antagonism between spirit and matter by means of pantheism, so that finally the Hegelian system represented merely a materialism turned upside down, according to idealistic method and content." To dialectic materialism, pantheism is but materialism in disguise, a system which hides its real essence

in theological terminology, which may have been justified in the days of Spinoza, but which now, in a scientific age, is of no advantage. The reason you still cling to a pseudo-spiritualist philosophy is that bourgeois society craves its comforts in this period of its approaching decline, just as a sick and dying man craves an opiate to make him forget his hopeless condition. Then there are still many proletarians who are held in check by the controlling forces of a religious philosophy. If you permit this to disappear by showing your real philosophical face, the social revolution will come much faster than it is coming at present.

THE BANKER: We were invited here to discuss philosophy, but this sounds like Union Square soap-box oratory.

SOCRATOV: My first "chair" in philosophy was a soap box in Union Square, which I held down until the revolution called me back to this country. On the other hand, what is true of idealism is also true of materialism. It likewise does not remain static. "As idealism has passed through a series of revolutionary developments," says Engels, "so also has materialism; with each epoch-making discovery in the department of natural science, it has been obliged to change its form." However, while this continuous process has been going on, each new discovery has added important material to prove the dialectic of nature and of human relations. Engels lived to see three great discoveries, all of which corroborated the dialectic hypothesis of evolution—the discovery of the cell; the discovery of the law of the transformation of energy; and Darwin's laws of organic evolution. "The cell," writes Engels, "is the Hegelian thing-in-itself and in its development passes precisely through the Hegelian process until it finally develops completely the 'idea' of the given organism." The conservation of energy, and the atomic theory, illustrate the relation of quantity to quality and seemed to Engels a positive proof of the dialectical behaviour of matter. Darwin's discovery was a great triumph for Engels. He read Darwin's *Origin of Species* ten days after its publication, and wrote about it to his friend Marx. This shows his keen interest

in the field of natural science and his efforts to develop the hypothesis of the dialectic of nature.

THE PROFESSOR : And how did Marx react to the Darwinian theory ?

SOCRATOV : Marx equally appreciated Darwin's contribution, although of course he interpreted it from his own socialistic point of view. In a letter to Engels, he writes : " This book contains the basis of our theory according to natural history," and in a later letter he adds the criticism : " It is remarkable how Darwin discovers anew among animals and plants his English society with its division of labour, competition, discovery of new markets, ' inventions ' and the Malthusian ' struggle for existence.' This is the ' bellum omnium contra omnes ' of Hobbes, and reminds one of Hegel's *Phenomenology*, where bourgeois society functions as the ' spiritual-animal kingdom,' whereas in Darwin it functions as bourgeois society."

THE REFORMIST : A clever and pointed analysis. Here we have Marx at his best.

SOCRATOV : We have seen then, how the Marxian theory in its progressive development embraced one sphere of thought and life after another. It drew upon nature and upon social relations for its materials. Its hypothesis is not read into them, but as Engels said : " Nature furnished the test of dialectics and this much we must say for modern natural science, that it has contributed towards this test an extremely rich and daily increasing material, whereby it has demonstrated that, in the last instance, nature proceeds by dialectical not by metaphysical methods ; that it does not move upon the eternal sameness of a perpetually recurring circle, but that it goes through an actual historic evolution." Truth was no longer a collection of ready-made dogmatic statements which could be retained unchangeable. Truth proved to be a process ever continuing and never reaching the point which may be called absolute. The dialectic philosophy destroyed the last vestige of static dogma and advanced the revolutionary hypothesis of the negation of all that is, the negation of the negation itself.

Enter bell boy, presenting a note to the leader.

THE LEADER : We are expected for a special interview at the Soviet Western Chamber of Commerce. The appointment was made at the request of the Senator, but we are all invited. I am sorry to break into this interesting discussion, but we can continue to-morrow, if our friend Socratov consents.

SOCRATOV : I am at your service as long as you are in Moscow.

DIALOGUE IX

In which the Laws of Dialectics are Interpreted.

THE PROFESSOR : Our century prides itself on being the age of exact science. It does this at the expense of, and with conscious disregard of, philosophy. To many it even seems that philosophy is a harmful thing, since it distracts men from the concrete and sets their interest upon generalizations. I do not share this view, and I was glad to learn that Marx and Engels, while profoundly interested in every new scientific discovery, were resourceful enough to synthesize the results of science and to establish the proper relation between science and philosophy. The generalizations from scientific analysis we commonly call scientific laws. These are derived from selected facts and phenomena referring to one or another aspect of being. Such detailed generalizations, while of great practical significance, do not show us the relation of all the details to each other ; in short they do not give us the general laws of evolution—assuming that such laws actually exist. I am quite conscious of the many pitfalls which such efforts present. The history of philosophy may be called an archive of abandoned general laws and principles. In spite of these failures to attain to such all-embracing directive principles, the best human minds have never rested and have again and again returned to search out these laws. Marx and Engels were such minds, and their dialectical method is offered as an instrument for arriving at such universal laws in the evolution of nature, society and the workings of the human mind. We have reached the point where we need information about the results of the work done by Marx and Engels in this sphere.

SOCRATOV: The emphasis of dialectics is on *movement*. Everything develops, everything is in relation to everything else and is constantly changing. It is, therefore, unscientific to view the world or any part of it in terms of fixed concepts, as was the habit of the old metaphysicians. Science, in taking up the descriptive study of the details of nature in their static aspect, lost to some extent its general grasp of the moving and evolving process. The study of details to which science was chiefly devoted in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was a necessary step in the preparation of material for a larger, synthetic view of nature and history. Unfortunately the habit, in exact descriptive science, of viewing things and the processes of nature separately, out of their general relations, i.e. in a state of rest or permanency, rather than in their life process, was carried over from the laboratory of the natural scientist to philosophy. This contributed to the static, metaphysical habit of reasoning where yes is yes and no is no. The habit of looking at things either as existing or not existing, where the positive and negative mutually exclude each other, and where cause and effect are fixed and permanent opposites —this metaphysical habit of thought is alien to dialectics.

THE HUMANIST: We have heard much about the power of dialectics to make the world intelligible and orderly, but I fail to grasp what these laws of dialectics represent in themselves.

SOCRATOV: According to Engel's formulation, the general laws of dialectics may be reduced to three:

(1) The law of the transition of quantity into quality pan vice versa.
(2) The law of the interpenetration of opposites.
(3) The law of the negation of negation.

These laws may be traced everywhere; illustrations may be selected from mathematics, natural science and history.

THE ROTARIAN: Will you illustrate these laws, please? They sound simple enough, but I can't think of anything which makes them real.

SOCRATOV : Well, let's take first the law of the transition of quantity into quality. Modern chemistry is built upon the principle of quantitative changes and relations in the atomic composition of matter. Remember the formula for common drinking water, H_2O. If we add one more atom of oxygen, so obtaining H_2O_2, we find that quantitative increase is accompanied also by qualitative change. We no longer have drinking water, but peroxide of hydrogen—a useful antiseptic, but by no means fit for drinking. What is true of oxygen is also true of carbon and of hydrogen. There is the so-called hydrological series of carbon compounds. Common Methane (CH_4) is transformed into Ethane (C_2H_6) by a change in the quantities of C and H. Further increases such as those resulting in C_3H_8 and C_4H_{10} show new qualities. Mendeleyev's classification of the elements according to their atomic weights is a striking illustration of the Hegelian law of relation of quantity to quality, and also of the sudden " leap " from one quality to another when the proper quantitative proportion has been reached. The " leap " or " mutation " as it is called in biology, is a very important fact in the evolutionary process, for upon it is based the teaching of the necessity of revolution, i.e. of a sudden change from one state to another, when the slow preparatory quantitative or qualitative changes have been fulfilled. Thus " revolution " is a dialectic necessity and a part of the evolutionary process.

THE BANKER : What has chemistry to do with revolution ?

THE SENATOR : Your analogy is illuminating, but is it really a law ? In your illustration about water and peroxide you are changing the proportions of different elements and hence you are mixing two different quantities rather than one quantity. You can't get a new quality by a simple increase of quantity.

SOCRATOV : Perhaps my illustration was not very convincing. Let's try another. Take the problem of population. Man, it would seem at first sight, is a certain quantity and he remains man, no matter how much you increase his numbers. But this is not the case. His state of mind does change with increasing numbers. Every one has experienced this who

has fought his way through a mob to get into a Moscow tramcar or a New York subway. People in a crowd act differently and are of different quality from man in isolation or in smaller groups. The inhabitant of a metropolis is of different quality from his closest kin who live in a country town. The law of values is closely related to numbers. Overproduction of any commodity reduces the value or at least the price of the article.

THE BANKER: This also holds true of banking business. A dollar is not always a dollar. It changes its value with the amount available.

SOCRATOV: You are beginning to get the idea of this law, but we must guard against the error of trying to reduce everything to this one law of qualitative change. The next law is that of the interpenetration of opposites. This is quite commonly applied in mathematics. Operations with minus quantities seem to be an absurdity, yet the negative quantity may be the square root of any quantity, since each negative quantity multiplied by itself gives a positive square. In higher mathematics the straight and the curved line are taken as the same, and the straight line is not always the shortest, etc. These apparent contradictions in higher mathematics are nevertheless instrumental in attaining results unthinkable in the lower branches of mathematics.

THE PROFESSOR: In organic processes the interpenetration of opposites is the law of life. The evolution of species knows no hard and fast lines. Think of the transition from reptile to bird, the so-called archaeopteryx, or of the pithecanthropus erectus, one of our simian ancestors. Life and death are inseparable, as is well illustrated by the process of metabolism. The organism is both multiplicity and unity, of which the life of the cell and its relation to the organism is a good illustration.

THE REFORMIST: In the economic sphere, you may also trace this law. Production and consumption are opposites and yet they are a unity. Without production there is no consumption, and in turn consumption makes production possible—it creates it, so to speak. The disturbance of the equilibrium between production and consumption results in

severe economic crises which affect social, political and international relations.

SOCRATOV : Lenin built his theory of the class struggle during the transitional period from capitalism to socialism under the guidance of this law. Classes in their evolution interpenetrate. Proletarian and peasant, the bourgeois and the feudal aristocracy obscure their class differences. There are times when the class interests of the capitalist and of the worker seem to dovetail into one another, and on this basis the reformist elements in the socialist movement concluded that this interpenetration, in the form of co-operation between capital and labour, could go on indefinitely. This is not the case. Each interpenetration has also its breaks, and upon the revolutionary philosopher lies the responsibility of recognizing the moment when the split becomes inevitable, so that he may direct the newly created situation to a higher synthesis and into a new category of being. Our NEP was such an interpenetration of the capitalistic and socialistic elements. So is the interpenetration of the different strata of the peasant population. The poor, the middle and the rich or " kulak " peasants have a tie in so far as they all work on the land. But the " kulak " is also an exploiter and a speculator, and as such he splits off from the peasant class and enters the category of capitalists. Here is also the difference between the city proletariat and the peasant class. But the peasant is at the same time a petty trader, and as such he is unlike the city proletarian, who is only a worker. Our collectivization scheme is built on the philosophy of the splitting off of the " kulak " class, its destruction and the transforming of the peasant from petty traders into producers working on co-operative socialist principles.

THE ROTARIAN : And what about the law of the negation of negation ?

SOCRATOV : It is the law of the higher synthesis. It also is commonly used in mathematics. The negative $(-a)$ multiplied by itself becomes a^2, i.e. the negation of the negation has accomplished a new synthesis. In organic life the repro-

ductive process is a negation of negation. The grain of corn dies, i.e. negates itself, after it has produced the blade, the flower and the new more numerous and differentiated seeds. In the social process the law of negation of negation has received wide application in Marx's studies of economics and of the class struggle, as we shall see subsequently.

THE PROFESSOR: You told us several times that the laws of dialectics are applicable equally to the working of the mind. What was Marx's interpretation of that?

SOCRATOV: The mind of man is subject to the same dialectical laws as nature, and to the same historic process, since it is part of nature itself. "Consciousness," says Marx, "did not exist previously as 'pure' consciousness. . . . My relation to my environment is my consciousness." Thus consciousness exists objectively but not as a special "spiritual substance." It is rather an attribute of the nerve and brain matter of the animal organism which is particularly well developed in man. In viewing the path of knowledge and the forms of its movement, we have the basis for the theory of knowledge of dialectical materialism. Dialectic logic differs from the old formal logic in so far as the latter pretends to be "pure" reasoning, constructed from abstract elements of the thinking process. Dialectic logic, on the contrary, consists in a rational grasp of the actual moving and changing world in its entirety—in its concrete relations—and it thus recognizes the contradictory elements which reveal themselves in actual being. Marx and Engels in general followed the Hegelian logic, recognizing and working with such categories of dialectic logic as cause and interaction, necessity and causality, necessity and freedom, purpose, singularity, particularity and generality as elements of understanding, induction and deduction, relative and absolute knowledge. In all these intricate workings of the mind, dialectic thinking and dialectic knowing is simultaneously the knowledge of things and of processes or more exactly, of things as processes. "Dialectic logic," says Engels, "in contradiction to the old, purely formal logic, is not satisfied to enumerate and place

entities without relation to the forms of movement of thought, i.e. the various forms of reasoning and conclusions. On the contrary, it derives these forms one from the other, fixes relations of subordination between them, but not of co-ordination. It develops the higher forms from the lower."

THE PROFESSOR : Those of you who have read or attempted to read Hegel's *Logic* will appreciate the service which Marx and Engels have rendered in mastering this most difficult part of the Hegelian philosophy. To focus our analysis and reduce it to the philosophical terminology to which we are accustomed, I should say that Marx and Engels dealt chiefly with three philosophical problems, the ontological, in which they took the side of materialism against idealism ; the epistomological, in which they stood for a scientifically tested realism, and finally by synthesizing these two they solved the problem of the analysis of the phenomena of nature, society and the human mind.

SOCRATOV : It may interest you to know how Marx characterized dialectics in its application to social phenomena and emphasized its revolutionary character. " In its rational form," he says, " dialectics produces hate and fear in the bourgeoisie and in its indoctrinated representatives, since *in the positive conception of existence it includes simultaneously the concept of its negation*, its necessary fall, viewing each existing form in movement, hence, also from its passing aspect, since it does not bow before anything and in its essence it is critical and revolutionary." The application of dialectics to the relation of classes and to revolutionary theory was made by Marx and Engels during their exile and shortly before 1848. In 1847 they joined a secret propaganda society, " The Union of Communists," and wrote at their request that amazingly prophetic document, *The Communist Manifesto*, which has not lost its revolutionary significance to this day. It is a masterpiece of dialectical skill. Here they truly proved that philosophy may not only explain the world but may also show how to change it.

THE BANKER: I looked into it, but couldn't read it. Would you mind telling us what its principal ideas are?

SOCRATOV: *The Communist Manifesto* unfolds the magnificent historical scheme of the development of bourgeois society and shows its inner contradictions. It presents history as the history of the class struggle, pictures the class development of the proletariat and points out the inevitable self-annihilation of capitalist society. "In this work," writes Lenin, "with genial clearness and terseness is outlined the new philosophy of life, a consistent materialism, embracing also the social life, dialectics as an all-sided and profound teaching of development, the theory of the class struggle and the world-wide significance of the revolutionary role of the proletariat, the creator of the new communist society."

THE PROFESSOR: We have been tracing the sources of the philosophy of dialectical materialism to the ingenuity of the great minds of the past. I fear we have done it at the expense of the most potent factor in the development of any revolutionary theory. We have not sufficiently stressed the social and economic environment, in short the historic background which necessitated the appearance of such a philosophy.

SOCRATOV: We may not have expressed it in so many words, but we cannot over-emphasize Marx's greatest contribution; his recognition of the proletarian class as a revolutionary force destined to be the weapon of history in solving the inner contradictions of capitalist society and the vehicle of a higher synthesis in the historic process. It seems to me that no one can express it as clearly as Marx himself. Let me read from *Capital*, which although written some six or seven decades ago, is now more than ever proving its prophetic significance. It deals with the development of capitalist society with all its social and political consequences. While many efforts have been made to disprove it, it still stands.

> "The capitalist method of production and appropriation and therefore also capitalist private property, is the first negation of individual private property based upon personal toil. The negation of capitalist production

is accomplished by itself with a necessity which characterizes the natural process. This is the negation of negation. Now not the individually producing worker is to be expropriated, but the capitalist who exploits many workers. This expropriation is accomplished by the action of immanent laws of capitalist production itself, i.e. it is due to the concentration of capital. One capitalist exterminates many others, and in hand with this concentration and expropriation of many capitalists by the few, there develops in an ever larger degree the cooperative form of the producing process, the conscious technical application of science, the rational exploitation of land, the transformation of the implements of labour in such a manner that they can only be used collectively, an economy in the means of production, by means of their collective use in joint socialized work, the absorption of all peoples into the system of world markets and hence the international character of the capitalist order. Together with the progressive decreases in the number of magnates of capital who seize and monopolize all the advantages of this process of transformation, there is increasing poverty, oppression, enslavement, degeneration, exploitation; but simultaneously there is also the indignation of the working class which constantly increases numerically and is continually disciplined, united and organized by the very mechanism of the capitalist process of production. The monopoly of capital becomes the fetters for that method of production which developed with it and under its influences. The concentration of the means of production and the socialization of production reach such a degree that they become incompatible with their capitalist shell. The shell breaks. The expropriators are expropriated."

THE REFORMIST: That passage can be called an expression of orthodox Marxism. But with all respect to the genius of Marx, is it still valid? You communists want to be orthodox Marxists, yet your Lenin went ahead, establishing a dic-

tatorship of the proletariat and expropriating the capitalists long before capitalism really had a chance to develop in Russia. You skipped, so to say, the capitalist age. You are trying to graft a communist society upon a primitive rural civilization. I don't say that you won't succeed. I only say that it is not according to the Marxian programme. Then again, while the Marxian prophecy of the concentration of control in industry and finance is a fact, it is not accompanied by that " increasing poverty, oppression, enslavement, degeneration, exploitation," in short, by what we usually call " increasing misery." I don't think that the facts of the development of capitalism, particularly in our country, corroborate this doctrine. Finally, Marx reduces everything to economic determinism, ignoring psychological, racial, cultural and many other factors which are equally important in the development of modern society.

THE PROFESSOR : You have stated three important problems relating to Leninism, to Marxian revisionism and to economic determinism. I don't think that Socratov can do justice to your objections at this late hour. I suggest that the problem of Lenin's interpretation of Marxism be taken up as an independent subject ; as to the other subjects, let Socratov decide for himself.

SOCRATOV : The doctrine of " increasing misery " to which so much objection is being raised, is to my mind incorrectly interpreted by our critics. Let us remember that Marx understood that America in its development occupied a special position. He expressed himself frequently on the subject when he was a correspondent of the *New York Tribune*, under Horace Greely's enlightened editorial policy. He also understood the special place that Russia occupied, of which however we shall speak in discussing the problem of Leninism. We must not forget that Marx was a *dialectical* materialist. He emphasized movement and continuous change with its unlimited possibilities. He knew the dialectical categories of the unexpected and the accidental. Nevertheless, I believe that in its general tendencies the trend of the curve has followed Marx's outline. Don't you realize that the World War with all

its misery, disease, poverty and ruin was a result of capitalism, a direct product of the imperialist rivalry of capitalist nations? Don't you really believe that the tens of millions of unemployed, numerically larger than the whole population of England at the time when Marx wrote this passage, are miserable? The temporary waves of prosperity, which have given the worker, particularly in America, many comforts unknown to previous generations of workers, do not change the fact that he feels his poverty more intensely during a crisis. Further, the prosperity of the imperialist nations has been achieved to no small degree through the exploitation of subjected colonial and semi-colonial peoples in Asia, Africa and other parts of the world. The last word about this doctrine has not yet been said, and it is doubtful whether capitalism will get back on its feet, even with the aid of the Macdonalds and Thomases.

THE HUMANIST: I think the criticism that Marxism ignores the psychological factor, at the expense of the economic, deserves an answer.

SOCRATOV: Marx and Engels were quite aware that spiritual and cultural development are not independent of the dialectical process of evolution. Religion, morals, education and art reflect the class structure of society. There is no absolute religion, no absolute "good" or "beauty." "As a matter of fact," Engels says, "every class as well as every profession has its own system of morals, and breaks even this when it can do so without punishment." Therefore they disagreed with Feuerbach's over-estimate of the force of religion in social evolution. The periods of man's development, which were supposed to be differentiated by changes of religion, are false. "Religious feeling is itself a product of society." However, every ideological notion develops once it has risen, and it grows like an avalanche by picking things up on its historic path. "We see that religion, once arisen," Engels says, "contains material of tradition, hence in all ideological matters religion is a great conservative force." However strongly the economic factor in history is stressed, it is nevertheless a

mistake to consider it the only determining force recognised in Marxian philosophy.

THE PROFESSOR: Stimulated by our discussion and your frequent reference to Engels' *Ludwig Feuerbach*, I looked into the volume and noticed that Austin Lewis quotes in his introduction two letters written by Engels in 1890 to the editors of the *Sozialistische Akademiker*, which bear on the subject we are discussing. He writes, in one part as follows:

> "Marx and I are partly responsible for the fact that the younger men have sometimes laid more stress on the economic side than it deserves. In meeting the attacks of our opponents it was necessary for us to emphasize the dominant principle denied by them, and we did not always have the time and opportunity to let the other factors which were concerned in the mutual action and reaction get their deserts. . . . According to the materialistic view of history, the factor which in the last instance is decisive in history is the production and reproduction of actual life. More than this neither Marx nor I have ever asserted. But when anyone distorts this so as to read that the economic factor is the sole element, he converts the statement into a meaningless, abstract, absurd phrase. The economic condition is the basis, but the various elements of the superstructure—the political forms of the class contests and their results, the constitutions, the legal forms, and also all the reflexes of the actual contests in the brains of the participants, the political, legal, philosophical theories, the religious views—all these exert an influence on the development of the historical struggle and in many instances determine their forms."

THE HUMANIST: This shows Marxism in an entirely different light from that in which it is habitually presented. I wish we could devote some of our discussions to an analysis of the relations of Marxism to such cultural values as science, art, literature, religion and the like. After all, these are

the things that interest the masses, rather than abstract theories.

THE PROFESSOR: Let us first get the necessary historical and theoretical background. To-morrow we shall begin our discussion on the place of Lenin in communist philosophy.

DIALOGUE X

In which the Place of Lenin in Communist Philosophy is Expounded.

THE REFORMIST: We Western socialists confess that Lenin is a puzzle. To deny his genius would be folly, for history has justified him. To imitate him is to my mind still greater folly, and most un-Leninlike, for he was not an imitator. However, we all agree that we must learn from him, and there our problem arises. What was Lenin? Wherein lay his strength? Was it his genius for organization? Was it his inspiring personality, with its relentless faith in the justice of his cause? Or was Lenin predominantly a thinker, who philosophically and scientifically formulated the premises underlying the revolutionary movement in your country and throughout the world?

SOCRATOV: Was Lenin a great leader and personality? This question is answered in the affirmative, even by his worst enemies. But was he a philosopher? There opinions differ. If philosophy is an attempt to rationalize a past and bygone age, which is the favourite occupation of all academic philosophers, then we can hardly call Lenin a philosopher. But Lenin was a philosopher if we mean that philosophy is a theory of knowledge derived from actual life, and a theory of action based on this knowledge. Lenin was a modest man who never thought of parading as a philosopher or of attaching his name to some pseudo-original system. As a revolutionist, he embraced Marxian dialectical materialism. He never wanted to be anything but a faithful apologist of this philosophy and an ardent revolutionary, enthusiastically and wholeheartedly applying his beliefs to the destruction of the old and the creation of a new social order.

THE HUMANIST: What strikes me in reading Lenin is his intolerant, even rude attitude towards his opponents, even when they differ with him on a minor point.

SOCRATOV: Lenin always was openly and honestly an uncompromising partisan in philosophy as well as in politics. He was convinced that all thought is partisan. "Recent philosophy is as partisan as it was two thousand years ago," was his conclusion after a most thorough analysis of ancient and modern philosophy. On this ground he fought bitterly every attempt of friend or foe to obscure philosophic issues, to flirt with philosophic fads, to revise Marxian principles of dialectical materialism, and to surrender to evolutionary tactics in the struggle to attain socialism. He fought especially such modernist tendencies as agnostic empiricism, neo-Kantian empirio-criticism, empirio-monism, empirio-symbolism and other philosophic fads to which so many socialists both in Western Europe and in Russia gravitated, landing finally in opportunist revisionism in politics and in a sterile eclecticism in philosophy.

THE ROTARIAN: I never knew there were so many philosophies. It reminds me of Heinz's fifty-seven varieties.

THE PROFESSOR: We know so little of the background which contributed to Lenin's philosophical development. We shall hardly be able to appreciate the man, unless we trace the evolution of his mind, and in this case not only of his mind, but of the powerful movement of thought which bears his name, Leninism.

SOCRATOV: Lenin's interest in philosophy dates back to the nineties of last century, when the Russian Marxists, led by G. V. Plekhanov, fought the romantic philosophy of the Russian Narodniks. The Narodniks were those Russian intellectuals who fought Tsarist autocracy and hoped for an indigenous non-capitalist development of Russia founded on the Russian commune. The last of their great ideologists, N. Mikhailovsky, crossed swords with the ascending Marxists who were exposing the Utopianism of the Narodnik social philosophy. G. V. Plekhanov, the father of Russian Marxist

philosophy, led the attack upon the Narodniks. Lenin joined him and recognized him as his teacher in Marxian philosophy. Many years later, when Lenin had superseded Plekhanov, not only in the field of political tactics, but also in his dialectical thinking, which is now generally recognized as a new stage in the development of communist philosophy, he paid tribute to his teacher. " No one can become a conscious, *real* communist," he said, " without studying—precisely studying—everything written by Plekhanov on philosophy ; it is the best of all the international literature of Marxism."

THE REFORMIST : Magnanimous of Lenin to give this appreciation to one who was for years his opponent and with whom he parted company when the Bolshevik movement was launched as an independent Party.

SOCRATOV : Not only Lenin, but the Bolshevik Party, for all its intolerance towards its political and ideological enemies, maintains the same appreciation toward the labours of those no longer belonging to its ranks. Plekhanov first pointed out the significance of the revolutionary proletarian movement, which was to supercede Narodnik romanticism, and become the firm foundation on which to build the socialist order in Russia. Plekhanov applied the Hegelian principle of " quantity changing into quality " and the development by " leaps " or mutations. He looked forward to the time when quantitative increase of the Russian peasant-proletarian would change his docile apathy into revolutionary aggressiveness, and thus prepare the " leap " from capitalism to socialism. Here we see that Plekhanov made a correct prognosis of what actually happened three decades later. Lenin grasped these ideas, and proceeding from these premises, he made his debut in philosophy in 1894, when he attacked the Narodnik criticism of Marxism by Mikhailovsky in the article, " What does it Mean ? The Friends of the People."

THE HUMANIST : Strange title ! What was his argument ?

SOCRATOV : Lenin made it clear that the dialectic method, not the metaphysical, was considered by Marx and Engels as the scientific method in sociology, and that it consisted in viewing

society as a living organism in continuous process of development, and not as a mechanical sequence which permits all kinds of arbitrary combinations of separate social elements. To produce relations which make up a given social formation, an objective analysis and study of the laws is necessary in which the functioning and development of the social organism can be observed. The same year, P. Struve's " Critical Notes on the Problem of the Economic Development of Russia " appeared, in which the author pretends to approach the problem as a Marxist. The critical faculty of Lenin quickly detected that it was psuedo-Marxism, a transition from Narodnik romanticism to bourgeois liberalism and neo-Kantian revisionism of the philosophical principles of Marxism. As a rejoinder, in 1905, appeared Lenin's critical work, " The Economic Contents of the Narodnik Movement," which is equally directed against the fallacies of the Narodniks and the neo-Kantian tendencies of Struve. None of these early works of Lenin pretend to philosophical originality. They belong rather to the apologetics of orthodox Marxism.

THE SENATOR : The same Struve who founded the Constitutional Democrats and is now living abroad ?

SOCRATOV : The very same. He has allied himself with the monarchist émigrés.

THE BANKER : Some dialectical brain, all right !

THE PROFESSOR : Lenin started out as a critic of the Narodnik romanticism and of the revisionist movement in Marxism, which, if I remember rightly, was popular among the German social democrats at that time.

THE REFORMIST : Eduard Bernstein and his school.

SOCRATOV : Lenin's revolutionary activities landed him in Siberian exile from 1897 until 1900. During this forced seclusion from active party work he studied philosophy. He began with the classic philosophers, Kant, Fichte and Hegel. He also followed the new philosophical developments in the socialist movement in the West and in Russia, where the revisionist movement was ably resisted by Plekhanov and Kautsky, who at that time still stood on orthodox Marxian

principles. During this period it became clear to Lenin that scientific revolutionary socialism cannot have any other philosophy than dialectic materialism. I have already described Lenin's intensive activities after his return from exile—the founding of the *Iskra* and the second congress of the Russian Socialist-Democratic Labour Party, with its subsequent division into Bolshevik and Menshevik thought.

THE REFORMIST: Lenin's exile seemed to have a great deal to do with his uncompromising attitude towards the modern trends in socialism. Naturally he could not feel the pressure of life, particularly in the West, which determined these movements. In following them from afar, he evaluated them in the abstract, testing their consistency with Marxian principles. If Lenin had lived in the free democratic atmosphere of the West, instead of in the Tsar's prisons and in Siberian exile, who knows whether there would be a Bolshevik movement to-day? This is why we Western socialists claim that Bolshevism is peculiarly indigenous to Russia. I would call it "Siberian Exile Socialism," which is fairer than Kautsky's terminology "Asiatic Socialism."

THE HUMANIST: I am inclined to agree with your point of view. It seems to be dialectical. It recognizes movement, change, adjustment. In short, it demonstrates that Western socialism is not dogma, but a living and changing thing.

THE PROFESSOR: But so is Bolshevism, only its movement and change have a revolutionary outlook, and do not consist in an opportunist surrender to the quasi-democratic environment of Western plutocracy.

SOCRATOV: Remember the 1905 revolution. Its tragic failure was in no small degree due to the compromising tendency of the Mensheviks. They continually gravitated towards coalition with the bourgeois liberal parties, and finally reconciled themselves to the pseudo-parliamentarianism of the Tsarist Duma. All these facts had a profound influence on their revolutionary theory. The noted Russian Marxian philosopher, A. Bogdanov, at the time a Bolshevik, produced a philosophical theory which he called "Empirio-Monism." He was followed

by other writers, such as Youshkevich, who formulated a philosophy of " Empirio-Symbolism." Others drifted towards mystical interpretations of the revolution. The empirio-critical philosophy of Mach and Avenarius was their starting point, but they rapidly drifted away from dialectical materialism, and were soon embracing Kant and other forms of idealism, and what Lenin called " Fideism," because it amounted to a modernist theology. Lenin was alarmed. He saw the danger of these philosophical fads to the integrity of the Marxian revolutionary movement. In 1908 he went to London, where he devoted himself to the study of the problem. In September of that year he completed his main philosophic work, *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism.* It is a monumental treatise of profound critical ability and scholarship, which mercilessly exposes the reactionary nature of the Empirio-critical philosophy, particularly in its Russian socialist adaptations by Basarov, Youshkevich, Lunacharsky, Suvarov, and Berman. This group expressed its modernist views in a collective work entitled, *Outlines of Marxian Philosophy.* This book showed that revolutionary theory was in a state of crisis. It made an attempt to revaluate Marxism in the light of the experiences of the 1905 revolution and of the revisionist tendencies of Western socialist thought, which threatened to emasculate Marxian revolutionary philosophy.

THE REFORMIST : It seems to me that Lenin was taking philosophy altogether too seriously. After all, philosophy is understood by very few people, and its pretended impetus to action is rather a theory than a proven fact. I know many red-blooded socialists who are exceedingly active, but who would fail any examination on the A B C of Marxism ; again, I know others who know a lot of theory, but in revolutionary action aren't worth two pins. I do not say that I altogether share this opinion, but still we must not shut our eyes to facts, and in our country this attitude toward philosophy is rather common.

THE BANKER : We may fail tests on philosophy, but when it means getting things across, then we can show these Europeans

a thing or two. Philosophically-minded German Generals like Bernhardi and his tribe thought that America would never fight in Europe; that even if we did join the war, we could never raise an army big enough to amount to anything. Didn't we fool them and show what America can do if she makes up her mind?

SOCRATOV: That is not the way the Bolshevik mind works. The Bolshevik, too, knows action, but he also has learned from Lenin that philosophy is a powerful intellectual weapon, and that there can be no revolutionary action without revolutionary theory. To Lenin, Marxian philosophy was such a weapon. He zealously guarded it, kept it sharp and clean, and taught others to make full use of it. He paid little attention to the bourgeois critics of Marxism. He was not afraid of them, but he was greatly alarmed when thinkers within his own party lost the Marxian perspective and were lured into the revisionist camp, away from the sound principles of dialectical materialism. How greatly Lenin was concerned about the new philosophic drift may be seen from some of his letters to Maxim Gorki. In February, 1908, he writes:

> "The *Outlines of Marxian Philosophy* has now appeared. I have read through the entire book with the exception of Suvarov's article (I am reading that now), and with the reading of such articles my indignation has grown more intense. No, this is not Marxism, and our empirio-criticists, empirio-monists, and empirio-symbolists are crawling into a swamp. To assure the reader that 'faith' is the existence of outward reality is mysticism (Bazarov); to confuse materialism and Kantianism in the most repulsive manner (Bazarov and Bogdanov); to preach a peculiar brand of agnosticism (empirio-criticism) and idealism (empirio-monism); to teach the workers 'religious atheism' and deification of high human potentialities (Lunacharsky) . . ."

In a later letter to Gorki he again takes up the subject of the *Outlines*, writing:

> "You must, and you certainly will understand, that once a member of the party is convinced of the absolute incorrectness and harm of a certain preachment, he is in duty bound to take a stand against it. . . . Plekhanov is absolutely correct in his opposition to them, but he cannot, or will not, or is too lazy to say it correctly, fully and simply, without scaring his readers away with philosophic subtleties. But I, no matter at what cost, will say it in my *own* way. . . . How can it be done? By keeping neutral? Not at all! There cannot be, and will not be, any neutrality on this issue."

THE HUMANIST: Quite characteristic of Lenin. These letters breathe his militant intolerance of contrary opinion.

SOCRATOV: This was Lenin's way, and he did it so thoroughly, so exhaustively, that after the appearance of *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism* no Bolshevik could consistently remain within the party and hold on to his old empirio-critical views. Since then, dialectic materialism has become the recognized philosophy of the communist party, and during Lenin's lifetime no serious attempts at revising it were made by Bolshevik Marxists. *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism* thoroughly treated the epistomological problems of philosophy, but other problems were indicated, and since then have been developed by Lenin's pupils.

THE REFORMIST: It strikes me as strange that even such a revolutionist as Lenin should take up such an abstract problem of philosophy as epistomology.

THE PROFESSOR: Not so strange. Philosophic thought, like any other aspect of mind, is subject to the influence of social environment. In Germany, for example, previous to the revolutionary year 1848, metaphysical problems occupied the minds of thinking people; after that there was an explosion of political philosophy; in the following decades, when Marx did his great work, the problem was economic and historical. These various aspects of philosophic emphasis recur in accordance with the social conditions which revive them.

SOCRATOV: Lenin understood this perfectly when he said: "Not upon subjective desires, but upon a correlation of historical conditions, depends the *predominance of interest* in one or another aspect." Lenin, while profoundly interested in every philosophic problem, wrote only on those aspects which the needs of the moment called for. Thus, during the period after 1905, when hardly any revolutionary political action was possible, the Russian Marxists turned to a revaluation of their philosophical premises and a readjustment of their thinking to the thought of the West. Notoriously late in its own philosophical development, Russia benefited by the experience of others. It had the advantage of youth, which never fears to tackle any problem or to try any theory in its efforts toward reconstruction. The controversy which ensued from Lenin's attack on the empirio-criticists lasted for a number of years, and resulted in the complete vindication of Lenin's position on the necessity of a clear party philosophy. During the period between 1912–1914, Lenin was collecting material for a treatise revaluating Hegel and his dialectics. Like Marx in his day, Lenin felt that an intelligent grasp of Hegel's *Logic* was imperative to the understanding of the philosophy of Marxism. In commenting on Hegel, Lenin writes in his notes: "The sum total and resumé, the last word and the sense of Hegel's *Logic*, is the dialectical method . . . this is exceedingly remarkable. And still another thing—in this idealistic work of Hegel's there is very little of idealism, but more than anything else, materialism. This is contradictory, but a fact."

THE HUMANIST: These little touches contribute so much to the understanding of his remarkable mind. Just think, to dig up an old, dusty German volume of Hegel's *Logic*, and re-digest it. Who of us would have the patience to do it to-day?

SOCRATOV: The events of the imperialist World War, during which Lenin made titanic efforts to reorganize for action the revolutionary elements of the Second International, with the slogan, "Turn the imperialist war into a civil war," was not a favourable time for developing philosophical theory. Neither

was the period which followed the events of 1917, when Lenin and the Bolsheviks were fighting for the life of the Soviet Union. Yet there is proof that even during this period Lenin did not forget his philosophy. In his treatise on the Labour Union movement, called " Once more on the Trade Unions," written in 1920, there is clear evidence that he based his reasoning on Marxian dialectics. To him, theory and practise were mutually interdependent, and his philosophic mind could not help basing every great revolutionary decision upon a corresponding philosophically-founded theory. Lenin's last public announcement in philosophy was made in 1922, when, in connection with the founding of the first communist philosophical magazine, *Under the Banner of Marxism*, he wrote the editors his famous letter, " On the meaning of militant materialism." This letter is called his philosophical will, and contains in outline those philosophical problems which he considered most important to the communist movement during the transition from capitalism to socialism.

THE REFORMIST: What are the points? They must be significant to your students in philosophy?

SOCRATOV: Briefly, the letter contains four points:

1. Combating the idealist philosophy wherever it may appear, be it in ecclesiastical circles, in modern science, or among socialist reformists.

2. The propagation of atheism, which he thought could be advanced by the republication of the atheistic works of the French materialists of the 18th century.

3. Co-operation with natural science, and those bourgeois scientists who are inclined toward materialism.

4. Revaluation of Hegel from the materialist point of view. Development of the method of dialectical materialism and its application to the study of present-day natural sciences.

His pupils and communist philosophers have worked ever since to carry out the " philosophic will " of Lenin. Some of the problems have been successfully treated, others are still in the stage of research. Had Lenin lived, he himself would undoubtedly have contributed toward the solution of these

problems, and in all his writings one may detect philosophical ideas of profound originality. More and more our philosophers become convinced that there is a system of thought which we may justly call Leninism, and which distinguishes him from his contemporaries, particularly from Plekhanov. In studying Lenin, we must, however, keep in mind that at all times during his exceedingly active life he was consciously the militant party philosopher to whom philosophy was not a leisurely occupation, but a weapon and a tool to defend and to build up the communist movement. This outline, though it does not give you much of an understanding of *how* Lenin tackled the various problems which he treated, does show you *why* he dealt with philosophical problems, and the importance he attached to them.

THE PROFESSOR: We appreciate your method of treatment, and personally I agree that even philosophy, or at least the emphasis on certain problems of philosophy, is historically conditioned. I think we should not, however, dismiss Lenin with the knowledge of his background. We ought to get an analysis of the problems which he treated. This would deepen our appreciation of Lenin as a philosopher.

THE ROTARIAN (*drawing his watch*): I wonder how many problems there are in Lenin's philosophy?

SOCRATOV: Many more than you could profitably digest before your dinner.

THE LEADER: If that is the case, I don't want to jeopardize the digestive apparatus of our rotarian leader.

DIALOGUE XI

In which the Philosophic Problems treated by Lenin are discussed.

THE LEADER: We agreed to devote this hour to a discussion of the problems which Lenin had treated philosophically. The importance of Lenin in communist philosophy is generally recognized. However, let Comrade Socratov present the case.
SOCRATOV: I have emphasized the fact that Lenin did not consider himself a professional philosopher, that he took to philosophy as a weapon to defend the theoretical basis of the revolutionary movement. He considered that his chief task was to disentangle dialectical materialism from various accretions of idealism. He wanted to show, too, how dialectical materialism may become the method of revolutionary action and the philosophical basis of the new social order, the victorious establishment of which he never doubted. Accordingly, the chief philosophical problems treated by Lenin may be indicated as: (1) The establishment of the boundaries of materialism and idealism; (2) the dialectics of thought and action; (3) the philosophical basis of the new social order. This classification, like any other classification, is more or less an arbitrary one. I take it for the sake of a more convenient treatment of Lenin's rich legacy of thought. His interests were as wide as life itself, and all of his public pronouncements had their philosophical bearings. Unfortunately, he did not live long enough and had too little leisure to bring his system of thought within the covers of one volume. This is now being undertaken by his pupils, and in the near future we hope to have a systematic presentation of Leninism.
THE REFORMIST: Has anything been published which may be considered a satisfactory presentation of Lenin's philosophy?

SOCRATOV: Nothing satisfactory. I. K. Luppel's volume, *Lenin and Philosophy*, and Stalin's essays on Leninism are probably the best treatment of the subject. The problem of the boundaries of materialism has been exhaustively treated in Lenin's chief philosophical work, *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*. Lenin calls this work, " Critical Notes Concerning a Reactionary Philosophy." Here he exposes the tendency of certain philosophical writers who call themselves Marxists, but deny materialism, and obscure the boundaries which divide materialism and idealism. This Lenin considered a reactionary tendency, endangering the whole theoretical foundation of the revolutionary Marxist movement, and he insisted upon drawing sharp lines which would indicate the boundaries of dialectical materialism on the one side and of idealism on the other. To use his own words, his task is, " to find out what is the trouble with those who, under the guise of Marxism, are offering something baffling, confusing and reactionary." Lenin went at his task in a thorough manner. He traced the revisionist efforts of the psuedo-Marxists, not only to their immediate antecedents, Mach and Avenarius, but to the father of modern idealist philosophy, Bishop Berkeley, who already, in 1710, had drawn the dividing line between idealism and materialism and concluded that " the existence of matter, or bodies unperceived, has not only been the main support of atheists and fatalists, but on the same principle doth idolatry likewise in all its various forms depend." Commenting on Berkeley, Lenin says: " Frankly and plainly did Bishop Berkeley argue. In our time, however, these very thoughts—of withdrawing ' matter ' from philosophy for reasons of ' economy '—are expressed in a form more cunning and baffling, disguised by the use of ' new ' terminology. This is done in order that these thoughts should be regarded by ' naive ' people as the most modern philosophy." Step by step Lenin analyses the arguments of Berkeley against " materialism," and his conclusion is that " the recent Machians did not adduce even one argument which had not been put forth by Bishop Berkeley."

THE HUMANIST : Who are these Machians ?

SOCRATOV : They are the Russian socialist followers of the empirio-critical philosophy of Mach and Avenarius. They emphasized, as the source of knowledge, subjective *sensation* which exists without " substance," or, as Lenin puts it, there is " thought without brain." This subjectivism he refuses to accept, because it is a disguised idealism, and insists that " sensation is nothing but a direct connection of the mind with the external world ; it is the transformation of energy of external excitation into a mental state . . . the sophistry of idealist philosophy consists in that it takes sensation, not as a connection of the mind with the outer world, but as a screen, as a wall which separates the mind from the outer world." Thus the dividing line between materialism and idealism is based on the recognition of the priority of either matter or sensation. A materialist is one who " takes matter as the *prius*, regarding consciousness, reason and sensation as derivatives." The idealist point of view clings to the opposite, taking sensation as the primary entity. This division establishes the boundaries between the two chief trends in philosophy—materialism and idealism—and Lenin refuses to consider any third " synthetic " point of view, which so many of the Machian Marxists vainly hoped to establish. Mach and Avenarius combined idealist assumptions with individual materialist inferences, and Lenin sees in this only an instance of that " eclectic hodge-podge " of which Engels had already spoken in contempt.

THE PROFESSOR : In accepting the priority of matter, you again raise the old question of the " thing-in-itself," and its knowability, the problem over which Kant struggled, and which the empirio-critics tried to overcome by appealing to experience. What is your objection to that ?

SOCRATOV : To the empirio-critics, the physical world is a " socially agreed upon, socially harmonized, or, in a word, a *socially organized experience*." Lenin asks whether the physical world would not exist " independently of humanity and of human experience," and reminds the critics that " the

physical world existed at a time when no ' sociability ' and no ' organization ' of human experience was possible." You see thus that he was not afraid of being charged with " naive " realism by postulating the knowability of the objective world. He reminds us that Feuerbach, Marx, and even Hegel did not deny objectivity and the reality of distinct objects. Hegel's " absolute idealism " postulates a physical universe independent of man, since nature is assumed as the " otherness of the absolute idea." This does not mean that our knowledge of the objective world is absolute. Dialectics, as Hegel explained it, includes an element of relativity, of negation and scepticism, but it is not thereby reduced to relativism. Thus, while recognising the relativity of all our knowledge, it is " not in the sense of the denial of objective truth, but in the sense of the historical conditions which determine the degree of our knowledge as it approaches the truth. Scientific test and practice is to the Marxian the best criticism of truth, it draws us continually near to it."

THE HUMANIST : You say that Lenin accepted an objective material world. What does he mean by matter ?

SOCRATOV : Lenin answered this question by saying that " Matter is that which, acting upon our sense organs, produces sensations ; matter is the objective reality given us in sensation." It is " some objective reality existing independently of the human mind and reflected by it." The recognition of an objective reality inevitably leads to the recognition of space and time as equally objective realities, and not merely *forms* of human understanding, as Kant taught. Their reality does not mean that in the course of time our conceptions of space and time do not change, that new material is added in this evolution. Lenin concludes :

> " The scientific doctrine of the structure of substance, the chemical composition of food and the electron may become antiquated with time ; but the truth that man is unable to subsist on thought and beget children on platonic love alone can never become antiquated ! And a philosophy which denies the objective of time and space

> is just as absurd, just as essentially foul and false as one which denies these several truths."

In this manner Lenin fought to establish rigid boundaries between materialism and idealism, and as we already know, he did it, and not out of " pure " philosophic interest. He did not believe in any pure philosophy ; philosophy was to him a partisan matter.

THE REFORMIST : Let us grant that philosophy is a partisan matter. Why is it necessary to object to empirio-critical philosophy as though it were counter-revolutionary ? Many distinguished socialists of the West adhere to this philosophy. Why couldn't the Russian socialists do the same ?

SOCRATOV : Lenin saw no possibility of the revolutionary proletariat accepting any philosophy other than dialectic materialism. Hence Machism, whether conscious or not, led in his opinion to a philosophy hostile to the proletarian class. Obscuring the boundary lines of these philosophies, making attempts to synthesize them, meant obscuring the class struggle and entering into compromise with the class enemy. Lenin pointed out that it was not an accident that these synthesizing Machian Marxists became compromisers in politics and anti-revolutionaries.

THE REFORMIST : Who, for example ?

SOCRATOV : I shall mention one only, the greatest of them, A. Bogdonov. In spite of his enormous erudition and old Bolshevik traditions, he was unable to grasp the necessity of revolutionary action in those historic October days. His Machian philosophy obscured his revolutionary consciousness and made him unfit for action. He has disappeared from intellectual leadership in the communist movement, for which he was otherwise so well fitted.

THE PROFESSOR : This discussion has shown us so far that by exposing the so-called Machian trend, Lenin drew a sharp line between the two basic trends in philosophy, historically associated with the idealist and the materialist schools. It is rather remarkable that, since the French Revolution, all revolutionary movements have been grounded in materialist philo-

sophy and reactionary conservative movements adhere to the idealistic.

THE HUMANIST: I have my doubts, Professor! Take the present nationalist revolutionary movement in India. It is led by the most profound idealist of our days, Mahatma Gandhi, who demonstrated to all the world that revolutions can be accomplished without violence.

THE PROFESSOR: With all due respect to the Mahatma, whose sincerity and integrity I do not doubt, he is a weapon in the hands of the rising native, Indian bourgeoisie. This class exploits his popularity among the uncultured masses of India. But wait until the class struggle becomes conscious among the Indian people. The bourgeois supporters of Gandhi will quickly change their front and find good excuses for not accepting Gandhi's "voluntary poverty." The bourgeoisie, in its struggle against feudalism, also turned against the romantic-idealistic philosophy of the feudal class in France, for instance, but after coming to power it quickly came to terms with the feudal church, which acts as a willing servant in keeping the masses in subjection to their new bourgeois masters.

SOCRATOV: Our next problem is to discover Lenin's dialectics of thought and action. Dialectics permeated all of Lenin's thinking. Like Hegel, Marx and Engels he accepts its laws as universally applicable to history, to nature, and to the working of the human mind. "Dialectics," says Lenin, "is the theory of knowledge. . . . Dialectics is a living, many-sided knowledge (with a continually increasing number of aspects) with an infinite number of shadings of every sort and approximations to reality." Of the different aspects of the dialectic process, Lenin emphasized the interpenetration and the unity of opposites. In his notes on dialectics, published posthumously, he says:

> "It is the recognition (discovery) of the *mutually exclusive* and opposite tendencies in all the phenomena and processes of nature (including spirit and society). The condition of the knowledge of all processes of the

> world as in *self-movement* in spontaneous development, conceived in its vital and living form in the knowledge of the unity of their opposites."

In accepting these laws, its implications for revolutionary theory are evident and Lenin skilfully applied them to the analysis of the world situation created by the war. With the war, the process of interpenetration of the opposite interests in the imperialist world came to a culminating point. A split was inevitable. Lenin foresaw that revolution would follow in the wake of the war and his task was to draw the proper conclusion from this dialectical phenomenon.

THE HUMANIST : What puzzles me is, how does a dialectician proceed in analyzing such phenomena ? I grant that every scientific method must have its hypothesis. The scientist who accepts this hypothesis proceeds to test it by corresponding experiments which either corroborate the hypothesis, correct, or disprove it. Remember the famous experiment which proved Einstein's theory of relativity, showing the curvature of light rays passing through inter-stellar space.

SOCRATOV : Lenin, in developing the definition of *materialist dialectics*, points out 16 characteristics of the same :

1. Objective analysis (not examples, but the thing in itself).
2. The correlation of the most varied relations of this thing to others.
3. The development of this thing. Its own movements, its own life.
4. The inner contradicting tendencies (an aspect) of this thing.
5. The thing (the phenomena) as the sum and unity of opposites.
6. Corresponding struggle ; unfolding of these opposites. Contradiction of aims, etc.
7. The joining of analysis and synthesis ; that is, the separation of parts and co-ordination, summing up of these parts.
8. The relation of each thing (phenomena, etc.) is not only varied but general, universal. Each thing (phenomena, process, etc.) is related to each.
9. Not only the unity of opposites but also the transitions of

each definition, quality, feature, aspect, characteristic and everything else (into its opposite).
10. Endless process of discovering new aspects, relations, etc.
11. Endless process of deepening the knowledge of things by man equally of phenomena, processes, etc., from the phenomena to its essence, and from the less profound to the more profound essence.
12. Advancing from co-existence to causality, and from one form of relation and inter-relation to another more profound, more general.
13. Repetition in the highest stage of certain features, characteristics etc., of the lower.
14. Quasi-return to the old (negation of negation).
15. Struggle of content with form and inversely. Shedding of form, change of content.
16. Transition of quantity into quality and inversely.

In these elements of dialectics, indicated by Lenin, we recognize such categories or concepts as contradiction, relation, quality, quantity, negation, form and content, cause and effect, etc. With the aid of these categories we may know reality, but we must learn how to relate these categories of dialectics to the objective world.

THE PROFESSOR: Am I right in concluding that the hypothesis of dialectics is that all things are in movement, that this movement is not mechanical, but by interpenetration of opposites, which present the appearance of a unity. The development of the opposites is an inner development. There is continuity and there are breaks. These breaks are an inevitable part of the process and the beginning of a new synthesis of continuity of movement. Now how to apply this general hypothesis? In my opinion, it must begin by an *analysis* of the given situation in order to determine, with the aid of past historical data and the facts of its present functioning, its actual status. A correct diagnosis of the past and present and of the opposites in a given unit permits us to project the future, relying for direction upon the dialectical hypothesis. The investigator

by making his analysis and so understanding the *status quo* may control and direct future events if he does not disregard the basic laws of the evolutionary process. In this respect, man realizes his freedom by being conscious of necessity. This was made clear by Hegel. Thus the human mind and will become socially creative. (I emphasize the " socially " because he cannot do it without relying upon the class he represents), the philosopher may change things and accelerate processes instead of merely explaining them ; not, however, arbitrarily, but in accordance with the dialectic law. The whole process is like a spiral repetition, in which the same phenomena reappear, but upon a higher plane and therefore with new qualities.

SOCRATOV : The problem of the relation between empirical facts, their dialectic analysis and the forecasting of the future process from that analysis, calls for more than the knowledge of dialectic logic, its categories and laws. It must not dogmatically be read into the facts ; it must rather be derived from the co-ordination of the facts and social forces at work. Lenin's ability to do this was the mark of real intellectual leadership. " Thought," writes Lenin, " which proceeds from the concrete to the abstract, does not—if it is right—depart from the truth, but approaches it. . . . From the contemplation of life to abstract thought and *from it to practice* —such is the dialectic path of learning the *truth* of knowing objective reality." The difference between the Marxian materialist dialectics adhered to by Lenin and the dialectics of Hegel is that the objective categories of Hegel are conceived idealistically. They are rather like ontological beings corresponding to the stages of development of the " absolute spirit " and they develop successively out of one another. Materialist dialectics, while maintaining the Hegelian categories, derives them from the actual, material and historical processes. Things correspond to them and the abstracted relations are real. The categories abstracted from these facts are the steps by which we learn at once to know and to control phenomena, whether in nature or in society.

THE REFORMIST: Has Lenin left a terse formulation of what he means by dialectics? I ask because it was Lenin's habit of thought to express things in slogans or brief formulas.

SOCRATOV: Lenin gives such a formulation. He says: "It is the *interdependence* of all concepts without exception; the *transition* of all concepts from one into the other without exception; the *unity of opposites* between the concepts." Thus the emphasis which Lenin makes in dialectics is upon the categories of interdependence of transition and of the unity of opposites. It is an eternal becoming, a continuous higher unity or synthesis resulting from the conflict of the opposites. In the historic process, however, the new synthesis, Lenin warns us, is never pure; there are elements of the old. Thus in the world there cannot be pure capitalism. There are always *admixtures* of feudalism, of middle-class elements and other ingredients. This is equally true in the transition from capitalism to socialism and from socialism to communism. There are many of the old elements which linger, or are absorbed in the melting pot of history. Dialectics helps us to see this process, since, as Lenin says, "It is the teaching of how opposites can be and are becoming one—under what conditions they become one, being transformed one into another—why man's reason ought not to take these opposites as dead and fossilized, but as living, conditional, moving, transformed one into the other." Thus dialectics is much more than the process of thought, or what is ordinarily called logic. It is this of course, but it is also a method of action on the basis of knowledge, just as the latter is the reflection of the process of action.

THE ROTARIAN: Thesis, antithesis, synthesis. The key words in Hegel's system, which we were taught for our philosophy quizzes at college. I never thought I would hear those words again, especially in Bolshevik Russia.

THE BANKER: Some interpenetration of opposites, all right! Lenin penetrating Hegel, and Hegel, the theologian teaching the Bolsheviks revolution and atheism! Some crazy world this is!

THE SENATOR: You may jest about it, but to my mind it is a serious situation. I am beginning to see how this dialectic theory gave punch to the revolutionists. We were to be told of the philosophic basis which Lenin designed for his new social order. This aspect interests me more than all the abstract categories of dialectic logic.

SOCRATOV: A sound philosophic basis was to Lenin the alpha and omega of a successful revolutionary movement to introduce the new communist social order. The Marxian social philosophy which Lenin developed is usually called historical materialism and corresponds to a methodology for the study of social phenomena. Sometimes it is also called "Marxian sociology" or "scientific socialism." Philosophically it is an application of the laws of dialectics to social phenomena, demonstrating the forces which are at work and which lead to the communist social order. Dialectic materialism proceeds from an analysis of facts and movements. It takes the concrete and seeks to discover the forces at work in the social process. Historically this process reveals the progressive conflict of class interests, which Marxian philosophy accepted as the principal factor in the development of social aggregates. Society, however, is more than an aggregate of individuals; it is a formation originating from the producing relations of groups and of individuals. "Ancient society," says Lenin, "feudal society and bourgeois society appear to be such *co-ordinations of producing relations* of which each in turn means a special step in the development of mankind. While one of these types is dominant the others may co-exist and intermingle with the rest."

THE SENATOR: What do you mean co-ordinations of producing relations?

SOCRATOV: Russia. Here, in many parts of this enormous territory, many races still live in primitive relations; others are in the stage of smaller or larger individual producers, with tendencies to adopt capitalist methods of production. This at present is opposed by State industry and a broad basis of socialist economy, both rural and urban. Lenin carefully

traced the development of classes in Russia, particularly the disintegration of the great peasant class with its differentiation into a rural and town proletariat on the one hand and a city and rural bourgeoisie on the other, the latter also mingling and merging with the remnants of the feudal nobility. He defines a class as a large group of people which differs according to the place it occupies in the historically definite system of social production, according to its relation to the means of production (which is usually also established and fixed by law) and finally according to the part they play in the social organisation of labour, and the means of obtaining wealth. In other words, classes are groups of people, such that one group may appropriate to itself the toil of the other owing to the difference of their situation, which is itself determined by the mode of their economic life. It was Marx who exhaustively studied the evolution of the capitalist class in the West, and pointed out the dialectic process in its development through which the antagonistic proletarian class arises and must inevitably replace the capitalist class. Such is the logic of the dialectics of history.

THE REFORMIST : Didn't Marx make an exception in respect to the development of Russia and the United States ?

SOCRATOV : When Marx made his great analysis of the development of capitalism, neither the United States nor Russia had fully entered upon their industrial development and there were no data available to reveal the processes which since then have been so glaringly demonstrated in both countries. Lenin was the first to undertake the study of the development of the Russian proletarian class, which appeared in history at a rather late date. Its growth was very rapid. The workers coming from the villages were thrown into large congested industrial centres. They were at first unorganized and therefore mercilessly exploited by absentee owners. All this made them very susceptible to revolutionary propaganda and soon a large section of them became class conscious and joined the revolutionary parties. When the old social order broke down, the proletarian class proved to be the fitter to survive in the ensuing

struggle. Facing this situation, Lenin and his party decided to direct the victorious proletarian class toward the establishment of socialism and not to permit the defeated bourgeoisie to return to power. According to his dialectic reasoning the fact that the proletarian class had consciously grasped its historic mission fitted it to make the leap into socialism and accomplish the great historic mutation.

THE REFORMIST : You would not call this orthodox Marxism, would you ?

SOCRATOV : Why not ? Conscious necessity is freedom. This Hegelian doctrine Marx and Engels fully approved. The working class led by Lenin was conscious of the opportunity presented. The balance of power was on their side. Lenin reasoned that, if a few thousand of the rotten nobility could rule a hundred and fifty million people against their interests, why could not the proletariat, and the intellectuals devoted to the cause of the proletariat, rule the country for the good of the hundred and fifty million toilers and against the interests of the relatively small exploiting minority ?

THE HUMANIST : But Russia was not an industrial country. It was a nation of over a hundred million petty property holders, the peasants. What right had the few million proletarians to decide the fate of these peasants ?

SOCRATOV : You are not familiar with the facts. First, you must realise that forty per cent. of the peasants were only peasants by birth. Actually they were serfs of the rural nobility and of the " kulaks." They had no draught animals, hence they were unable to work their land allotments. The land became the means to hold them and facilitate their exploitation. Besides these, there were millions of farm labourers, and these two groups, together with the city proletariat, were an actual numerical majority of the population. Then there were tens of millions of so-called middle peasants whose impoverishment was increasing at a rapid rate owing to the exhaustion of the land, the destruction resulting from the imperialist and civil wars and their inability to compete with the better equipped " kulaks " and the landlords. All these

millions of the unorganized rural proletarians were our actual and potential forces, of whom the class-conscious city proletariat was but the vanguard and leader.

THE PROFESSOR: If you want to decide your policies on actual and potential majorities, then since the existence of civilization, the poor and the exploited have been always in the majority. And your so-called government by majority rule is only a fiction.

THE SENATOR: I thought you were an American. You talk like a Bolshevik.

SOCRATOV: We were discussing the development of the class-struggle in Russia. We must bear in mind that when Lenin and the Bolsheviks took power the choice was not between the *dictatorship of the proletariat* and a *real democracy*, even if such were possible, but a choice between the dictatorship of the proletariat and a dictatorship of the remnants of the defeated Tsarist, militarist aristocracy, and the bourgeoisie. You must remember that the choice was between two different kinds of dictatorship, and every democratic-minded person, even though he has not grasped the historic process of the class struggle should nevertheless come to the support of Lenin's policy which established a dictatorship of the conscious proletariat for the good of the overwhelming unconscious majority and against the deadly enemies of the toilers. You may define Bolshevism as a dictatorship with an open door to democracy, whereas its possible alternative was a minority dictatorship with an open door leading back to autocracy. Lenin and the class he led were fully conscious that it was necessary to take this responsible historic step and being conscious of it, they were able to direct its further evolution by releasing the enormous social forces latent in the proletariat and by controlling and exploiting the abundant resources of nature in the Soviet Union. This consciousness of purpose makes the dictatorship of the proletariat a philosophically sound historic necessity. Hence the basis of the transitional period from capitalism to communism is the dictatorship of the class-conscious proletariat with the communist party as its advance

guard and leader. Lenin considered this the most important factor in the establishment of the new social order. He defended philosophically the principles of party solidarity and party unity, relentlessly struggling against every deviating tendency, whether in the theory of knowledge or in party tactics.

THE BANKER : Is that what you call Leninism ?

SOCRATOV : It is one of its principal premises. Besides this, it unfolds all the consequences that follow from accepting the principle of the dictatorship of the proletariat as a transitional state from capitalism to socialism and then to communism.

THE PROFESSOR : We have just listened to a most important statement, showing how Lenin applied his dialectic philosophy in directing the Russian revolution and laying the foundations of a new social order. The importance of its historic implications cannot be over-emphasized. I would suggest, therefore, that we devote another discussion to the principles of Leninism.

DIALOGUE XII

In which the Principles of Leninism are discussed.

THE REFORMIST: As a result of our recent discussions, I have tried to focus Lenin's philosophy in my mind. It appears to me in general outline as a militant, dialectic materialism, consciously and honestly partisan, dealing with a real material universe, which exists independent of and prior to human consciousness, developing dialectically by the synthesis of opposites according to a uniform law, which reveals itself equally in nature, in history, and in the workings of the human mind. In its historic aspect it shows that society is conditioned by producing relations, stratified into classes of opposing interests, changing progressively with the development of new producing relations. In short it is a militant Marxism, corresponding to the period of *The Communist Manifesto* (1847-48).

THE PROFESSOR: You should add that in the process of class stratification, the feudal aristocracy had to yield to the ascending bourgeoisie, which gained its victory first on the continent in the French revolution. The capitalist class gave birth to the proletarian class which in turn was rapidly ascending to power during the second half of the last century. Temporarily checked by the imperialist war, it gained a decisive victory in Russia, for reasons which were clearly brought out. Under Lenin's leadership, the Soviet State was organized with its rigid proletarian dictatorship, headed by a well-disciplined, compact communist party. In Russia there has been demonstrated the complexity of the dialectic process of change from one social order to another.

THE HUMANIST: In this connection I am interested in two

questions : the difference between Leninism and Marxism, and the characteristics of this new socialist order in its relation to such vital problems as the freedom of the individual for self-expression and of the ethical basis for the relations of individuals to the group and of the group to individuals ? Finally, what is the outlook for culture and other aspects of life in the new social order ? I particularly want to know Lenin's opinion on these questions.

SOCRATOV : The question of the difference between Leninism and Marxism has been variously answered by Lenin's pupils and followers. Some consider Leninism an application of Marxism to the peculiar conditions of the Russian Revolution. This would mean that Leninism is something peculiarly Russian and thus national in character. We communists object to such limitations and therefore do not consider this definition as sufficiently inclusive. Others consider Leninism a renaissance of the revolutionary elements of Marxism of the period of *The Communist Manifesto*. This is right as a starting point. Lenin was a consistent follower of the Marxian revolutionary thought and traditions, which were obscured by the opportunism of Western socialism, but he did not stop with this. He went ahead in developing Marxian premises to their logical conclusions within his own epoch. Stalin, the recognized leader of the present communist movement and one of Lenin's faithful pupils, defines Leninism as " Marxism of the epoch of imperialism and the proletarian revolution." Or more, precisely : " Leninism is the theory and tactics of the proletarian revolution generally, and the theory and tactics of the dictatorship of the proletariat in particular."

THE SENATOR : Stalin interests us very much. He seems to have unusual abilities of leadership. Can you tell us what Stalin thinks about Lenin and his teachings ?

SOCRATOV : Stalin has pointed out that since Marx lived before the period of capitalist imperialism, he could not of course develop his principles on the basis of this epoch of capitalism. This Stalin shows was masterfully done by Lenin, who demonstrated that :

(1) Socialism may become victoriously established in separate capitalist countries. This Marx deemed impossible in his own time.
(2) Lenin developed and applied the Marxian idea of the dictatorship of the proletariat by embodying it in the Soviet State and giving it a broad and firm basis in the alliance of the industrial proletariat with the rural proletariat and the poorer peasant class, thus establishing a proletarian democracy of the majority of the formerly exploited classes.
(3) Lenin developed the principles and tactics for the transition period from capitalism to socialism for a country surrounded by capitalistic states. These principles included the New Economic Policy, reserving the control of commanding economic positions with limited trade and industry to increase production but with a firm decision to introduce socialism among the peasants through industrialisation of farming along co-operative lines.
(4) The Marxian idea of the hegemony of the proletariat, Lenin developed into a complete system of control and leadership of the proletariat in the construction of the new social order. By this means enormous potential energies which were dormant in the proletarian class during the period of capitalism were released.
(5) In the national and colonial problem, Lenin developed Marxian ideas by applying them to the epoch of colonial imperialism and he showed how the oppressed nations could rid themselves of the imperialist yoke, by linking the struggle for national independence to the international proletarian revolution.
(6) Finally, Lenin developed the Marxian idea of the proletarian party as the advance guard of the revolution and demonstrated that the party is the highest form of class organization of the proletariat, focussing and guiding every state co-operative and social enterprise. It is thus the organ of the dictatorship of the proletariat, recruiting and disciplining the masses for creative work and maintaining unity and solidarity by excluding the strife of party politics.

We see thus, that while Lenin started with Marxian principles, he developed these ideas independently and applied them to the greatest revolution in history. He may therefore be justly considered the founder of the science of the proletarian world revolution—and that science is Leninism.

THE REFORMIST: It seems to me that Stalin particularly stresses the last point and interprets it as the priority of the party over the State. Some of us call this Stalinism rather than Leninism.

SOCRATOV: Every leader should be more than an imitator. It would be un-Lenin-like if we stopped developing the ideas which we inherited from him. Why should not something develop in due time which posterity will term Stalinism?

THE HUMANIST: This admirable formulation by Stalin, nevertheless, does not answer my second question on individual freedom.

SOCRATOV: Lenin lived at a time when emphasis was placed not upon the individual but upon class solidarity, and when it came to a conflict of the two, Lenin always decided in favour of the latter. However, he says: "The idea of historical necessity does not a bit undermine the role of the individual in history. In fact all history is composed of the actions of individuals." In the problem of the freedom of the human will Lenin decides in favour of determinism, but not in the mechanical sense. Determinism does not destroy reason, nor the conscience of man, nor the appreciation of his actions. "On the contrary," he says, "only from a determinist point of view is a rigid and correct evaluation possible; not by shifting almost everything on to the free will." A conscious grasp of things does not mean independence of them but makes possible their control. This is the case in our relation to nature. While we consciously control nature and make it do things for us we still remain a part of it and are subject to its general laws. The same is true of our relations to society; we do not blindly submit to the existing order, but in becoming conscious of the class structure and the class struggle in society we "*understand*," says Lenin, "*the necessity of this struggle*, its

contents, process and conditions of development." Thus, while recognising the prior claim of the group to any individual interest, Lenin looks forward to brighter days for the individual, when in the dialectic process of the class struggle, a classless society will result and thus the limitations of class control disappear.

THE SENATOR: If your aim is communism, then to my mind that means an absolute submission of the individual to the common will. There can be no freedom in communism.

SOCRATOV: A communist society is a classless society. The oppression of individuals is due to class control and class exploitation. You may call a worker in a capitalist country a free man. But this freedom reduces itself to the liberty of starving and dying of want unless the worker submits to the conditions of employment imposed by the owning class. He may become a tramp, but then he is liable to arrest for vagrancy and may even be deprived of the right to starve. In a class society, only the governing class enjoys a certain amount of liberty, but this liberty itself is always poisoned by fear of loss of position through the forces of competition or the wrath of the underdog. The ruling class is always compelled to maintain its system of oppression and exploitation, even though its individual members may hate and despise the cruel and bloodly business. They must maintain it or lose their power. Hence even the master class cannot boast of liberty. They are the slaves of their own system. John D. Rockfeller, Jr., may be a pious, gentle soul who did not desire the blood and pain of the Colorado miners, yet he could not prevent their cruel suppression when the miners struck against unbearable conditions in the company which he controlled. What was his excuse? He said he could not have his way against the majority of the administrating staff of the corporation. This same story is repeated to a lesser or a greater degree in every other class conflict and there is no way to avoid it unless classes are altogether abolished. This can be accomplished only in a communist society.

THE BANKER: Do you really believe that a time will ever come

when " the wolf shall dwell with the lamb and the leopard shall lie down with the kid." If this is to come, it certainly will not come by the will of man, but by a miraculous transformation of the world as the Church teaches us.

THE SENATOR: We are against communism because it is contrary to nature. The Creator has designed us to be what we are. There will always be some strong and some weak, some intelligent and some dull, some aggressive and others passive. It would be an exceedingly boring world to live in without these differences. Perhaps in a world to come, as religion visualizes it, it may be possible. But upon our planet, differences are inevitable. For this reason the wise framers of our constitution devised a system of checks and balances to keep the various class interests in a moving equilibrium. This is our philosophy. Everything else is utopian.

THE HUMANIST: You are defending the law of the jungle and throwing the responsibility on nature. Thank God, this is not a static world. In the process of evolution from our animal ancestry, we are progressively losing and suppressing the animal impulses. We attain this by education, co-operation and social living. I am firmly convinced that when Jesus said: " The meek shall inherit the earth," he did not make a pious jest but stated a universal truth. Examine the records of the history of nature and of the history of man. Its pages tell the story of the ascending meek. Probably all of you have been to the Museum of Natural History in New York and have seen those huge monster fossils of the Brontosaurus, Deinosaurus, and the rest. Where are they now? Did they inherit the earth? In spite of brute force and natural armament, they disappeared. We know only their fossils. And where are the rapacious animals, the lion, the tiger and the wolf? We find them only in the zoological gardens and in a few remote corners of the world. The territory of their habitation is reduced from year to year and soon they will become as extinct as the prehistoric monster reptiles. As far as nature is concerned, it is the meek who are inheriting the earth—the sheep, the cow and the friendly dog. The same process goes on in human society. There was a

time of cannibalism, of perpetual racial wars, of great despotic nations which ruled by force and oppression. Gradually these are disappearing. To-day there is no place for Alexander the Great, Caesar or Napoleon. Even though the conquest of weaker nations by the forces of militarism continues, it is under the guise of the stewardship of mandated territory and of making the world safe for democracy. I agree that there is much hypocrisy in all this phraseology, but the very fact that politicians can no longer openly speak of their organized banditry, shows that now there are higher ethical standards than there were a century ago. I do not disagree with the aim of the communists. I think the world is moving towards it. I do, however, uncompromisingly disagree with their methods, their teaching of violence and the class struggle.

SOCRATOV: The communist aim of a classless society alone can give the greatest amount of leisure and the widest opportunity for the development of one's intellectual, artistic and social interests. It can do this because, by means of a scientifically organized society, a planned economy and distribution according to needs within the limits of reasonable standards of living, the individual is freed from worry and fear for the morrow and can give his creative impulses free play on an unprecedented scale. In short it will reduce the compulsory aspect of social living to a minimum. Proper training will create habits of social service so that they will no longer be felt as a compulsive force. With this aim you will agree; but you object to our methods of attaining it. These objections can only be removed if you grasp the dialectics of the historic process. Evolution proceeds by the unfolding of the inner contradictions in the social organism. We call this the class struggle. Historically, the struggle went on between the feudal lord and the peasant serf, the feudal aristocracy and the bourgeoisie, between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. One class grows out of the other owing to the changes in the processes of production, the whole process starting from a primitive communism and dialectically returning to the same synthesis, but upon a higher plane. Darwin pointed out the law of the jungle, the law of

the survival of the fittest in the struggle for the means of subsistance ; though it was interpreted as a struggle of individuals. Kropotkin showed that there is mutual aid and co-operation within the species and struggle between them. Finally Marx demonstrated that within human society, the racial struggle is superseded by a class struggle in which the economic aspect is the determining factor. To deny struggle would therefore be folly. But to direct this struggle towards a rapid abolition of the classes is our privilege if we once understand the dialectic law of the evolutionary process. And no one understood it so well as Lenin.

THE REFORMIST : To my mind, democracy means the classless society. As such it must embrace, besides equal political rights, which in our country we have already attained, also the right of an equal participation in the socially produced wealth, in education, culture, leisure and security. In such a society, of course, there is no place for a capitalist economic and social order, which is the direct antithesis of social democracy and hence must disappear. We Western socalists hope to attain this by a peaceful transition through proper constitutional amendments.

THE PROFESSOR : Don't let us lose our historical perspective. Lenin faced the concrete situation of a bankrupt Russian feudalism and capitalism during the World War. He saw in this the working out of the Marxian dialectic process and seized power to accomplish the " leap " to the new socialist order of things and fortify its infant stage by a rigid dictatorship of the victorious proletarian class, together with a complete nationalisation of the land and means of production. In the West, capitalism has been running its natural course. It seems to be standing on its last leg at present. How long it will be able to balance itself in that position, I do not pretend to know, but sooner or later it will fall, owing to the inner contradictions that are a part of its nature. That I call a revolution. Meanwhile you may go on catching votes for your socialist candidates. It may have some educational value, but don't fool yourselves. It is not the solution of the problem.

SOCRATOV: We do not want to be dogmatic. We do not ask to be imitated. Every nation has its own historical background. In different situations, the procedure applied by the communists in Russia *may* not be imitated. Lenin was quite clear on this point.

> "To put this question," he says, "apart from the historically concrete situation, means not to understand the ABC of dialectical materialism. *In various moments of economic evolution, in dependence on various conditions, political, national, cultural, social, etc.*—various forms of struggle are brought to the forefront, because the chief forms of struggle and in relation with this, in turn are changed to the secondary, auxiliary forms of struggle. To attempt to answer 'yes' or 'no' to the question of a definite means of struggle, without examining in detail the concrete situation of a given moment at a given stage of its development, means to depart altogether from the Marxian ground."

Thus Lenin is not dogmatic about the strategy and forms of struggle. On the contrary, he presses the necessity of learning the art of reading the signs of the times and the art of manoeuvring without losing sight of the ultimate objectives. He rebukes impatient revolutionists by saying: "It is impossible to gain a victory by an advance guard only. For the advance guard to enter upon a decisive struggle before the whole class, i.e. before the broad masses have taken a position in direct support of the advance guard or at least are in friendly neutrality to it, and therefore incapable of supporting its enemy—this would be not only folly, but a crime." Therefore the seizing of power by a violent coup is only justified when the time for it is ripe, as was unquestionably the case in Russia.

THE SENATOR: Communists are apparently not anarchists. You maintain law and order, and as far as I can observe, have created a strong government with a reliable army and police force. Do you really expect that you can ever do without it? State and society are very much the same thing.

SOCRATOV: That is not Lenin's point of view. "The State,"

says Lenin, " is but a weapon of the proletarian in his class struggle—*a particular club*, rien de plus." In this respect it does not differ from any other State which always was and is but a weapon and a tool of the ruling class to conserve its power. The proletarian state is but the organized power of the proletarian class and as such is very valuable as a revolutionary weapon. The forms of the State, as such are but of relative value, says Lenin. We are for a democratic republic, as the best form of State for the proletariat under capitalism, but we have no right to forget that wage slavery is the fate of people also in a democratic bourgeois republic. The Soviet form of government was introduced by Lenin because it seemed to him, under given, concrete historic conditions, to be the best possible for the transitional period from capitalism to communism. This does not exclude the possibility of some other form, which may be better suited to conditions in other countries.

THE PROFESSOR : Nevertheless, you may rest assured that the experiences and achievements of the Soviet system, particularly its planned economy, will be fully taken into consideration by the Western world.

THE ROTARIAN : What do you really mean by the Soviet system ? In what way does it differ from any other system of representative government ?

SOCRATOV : We may characterize the Soviet system as a democratic centralism based upon the broad representation of the toiling population. The fact that you earn your living by honest toil and do not live on unearned income gives you the right of citizenship, the right to elect and be elected, regardless of sex, race and nationality.

THE ROTARIAN : Do you mean that I could vote and be elected to a Soviet as an American citizen ?

SOCRATOV : You certainly could, if you worked in this country and gained the respect of the citizens in the place of your employment and your community. Foreign specialists have been elected to the Soviets.

THE SENATOR : What need is there for representative govern-

ment under a dictatorship? Your representative bodies have nothing to do but assent to the decrees of the political bureau of the party.

SOCRATOV: I'll answer you by quoting Lenin. "Without representative institutions we cannot think of a democracy, even a proletarian democracy." In the last elections (Spring, 1931) sixty million Soviet citizens took part. Centralization for efficiency is essential and not contradictory to our goal as long as it does not become tyranny. The relation between the party and the great mass of the toiling population is organic and amicable. Our dictatorship is only dreadful to our class enemies, who in this country are practically wiped out. A few remnants linger. These have long lost their faith in themselves. Their hopes are staked upon foreign intervention. Our masses do not feel and are not conscious of a dictatorship, since they are the dictators. We need the party with its political bureau, as the geologist needs the seismograph, that subtle instrument which registers every tremor of the earth's surface. Our party keeps its ear to the masses. It is rooted in them. No man can be a member of the party who has not been tested in social service. Our masses are the severest critics of the whole Soviet system, including the party. Step by step the functions of government are socialized and government dies its natural death, replaced by social organizations. When the people have acquired the habit of social living, when class differences have disappeared, not only in our country, but among our near and distant neighbours, the State as a vehicle of force, as the "big club" will disappear. Then we shall have communism.

THE BANKER: You have numerous national minorities living in the U.S.S.R. How does this nationalism fit into your much advertised internationalism?

SOCRATOV: While international in outlook, Lenin recognized that true internationalism may be attained only by a fair recognition of the national cultures and languages of all nations and races. For this reason, he adopted the federal principle for the Soviet Union, with full opportunities for cultural

development of each national and racial group in the Union. This unprecedentedly liberal policy toward the national minorities must be understood as a means and not as an end. " If economics unites the nations living in one State, then the attempt to divide them for ever in the province of ' culture ' and particularly in the school question, is foolish and reactionary. On the contrary it is necessary to strive to unite the nations in the school in order that the school should prepare that which life is realizing." Thus the national school and cultural institutions should contribute to internationalism by the content of their teaching presented by means of the national idiom. In this manner it will not become the means of separating and isolating nations. Lenin believed that under existing conditions it would be best to take from each national culture its democratic and socialistic elements and merge them with the cultural values of other nations.

THE HUMANIST : Culture is the flower in the growth of every race. There can hardly be an eclectic culture, a taking of what is " best " from every one of them. Yet it seems that this was Lenin's point of view.

SOCRATOV : Lenin rejects the idea of " pure cultures " whether national or of a class. He holds that socialist and communist culture consists of elements inherited from the past and much which was developed during the capitalist epoch. " Without the heritage of capitalist culture, we cannot construct socialism. There is nothing from which to build communism except what was left to us by capitalism." Thus he insists on the continuity of culture, each class and social order contributing its part. He demands " a clear understanding of the fact that only by an exact knowledge of culture created by the development of all humanity, only by working it over, is it possible to build a proletarian culture. The proletarian culture has not appeared from nowhere ; it is not an invention of people who call themselves specialists in proletarian culture. All this is sheer nonsense. Proletarian culture must appear as a lawful development of those reserves of knowledge which mankind has attained under the yoke of capitalist society, feudal society,

bureaucratic society." While recognizing the continuity of culture and accepting it as the heritage of the human race, Lenin did not mean to accept it uncritically, but subjected it to a rigid analysis from the point of view of dialectical materialism. In this critical scrutiny certain elements of past cultures, as for example religion, are wholly rejected, and branded as a " spiritual yoke which burdens the life of the masses of the people everywhere."

THE HUMANIST: An unfair statement, against which I must protest.

THE LEADER: If we discuss religion now, we shall miss all our appointments for the rest of the day. I suggest that we postpone the discussion of religion to another day.

DIALOGUE XIII

In which is Outlined the Philosophic Development since the October Revolution.

THE PROFESSOR: We are in constant danger of losing our historical perspective, if we take up problems of special interest to any one member of our party. These problems can be understood much better on the background of the general development of Russian thought. I think that it will be good tactics if we postpone discussion of all special problems and devote this hour to an outline of philosophic development since the October revolution.

SOCRATOV: Looking backwards to the period of intense struggle with counter-revolution and foreign intervention (1918-21) which was accompanied by blockade, famine, and disease, you all will agree that such a time was unsuitable for philosophical work. Yet even during this time something was accomplished. To begin with the principal philosophic works of Marx, Engels, Plekhanov and Lenin were republished. Also some of the old popular literature on dialectic materialism was circulated to meet the growing demand of the awakening philosophical interests of revolutionary youth. The period of the New Economic Policy (the N.E.P.) inaugurated in 1921, proved to be more than a revival of economic activities and competition between the individualist and socialist sections in economics. It had its counterpart in a revival of thought on both sides of the philosophical barricade. The enemies of philosophical Marxism, particularly the romantic idealists and mystics like Berdyaev, S. Frank, L. Kersavin, P. Florensky, and others, were very active. They founded a " Free Philosophical Academy " in Moscow, which became the citadel of

reactionary philosophical thought. Here the defeated class-enemies of the proletariat sought comfort and worked at salvaging their shattered philosophical arsenal in the hope of finding new spiritual weapons to start an offensive against the hated communists who had defeated them in the recent revolutionary battles.

THE HUMANIST : That must have been an intense philosophical battle. I have heard the names of some of these Russian philosophers before. I was told that they represented the best minds in the anti-communist camp of Russian philosophy. How did the battle end ?

SOCRATOV : The bold offensive of anti-Marxist philosophy brought about ill-feeling on the part of communist students who were compelled to listen to teachers in philosophy in the universities who were known to be enemies of the new social order for which so many of these students had fought and bled. The class struggle on the philosophic front, as we sometimes call it, made co-operation between anti-communist professors and communist students impossible. The government finally decided to remove the hostile philosophic leaders and asked them to leave the country (in 1924) to join their fellows, who had fled with the routed White armies and found refuge in the capitals of Western Europe as political emigrés. Here the Russian philosophers of the old regime were free to express their ideas. This they did in a number of works which clearly reflect their minds and at the same time reveal the tragedy of the Russian intellectual class which could not grasp the creative opportunities of the new revolutionary social order. Most of these philosophers slid back into a mystic nationalism similar to that of the old Slavophils who had dreamed of a special national development of Russia which should be free of the contaminations and the poison of the bourgeois culture and ideology of the West.

THE REFORMIST : Have they produced anything which summarizes their point of view ?

SOCRATOV : Very characteristic of the mind of the Russian emigré intellectuals is the symposium of the Eurasian philoso-

phers, as they chose to call themselves, entitled, *The Way Out to the East*, with the sub-title, " Presentiments and Facts." This work was written just after the defeat of the White armies by Peter Savitsky, G. Suvchinsky, Prince N. S. Trubetskoy and George Florovsky. The authors concede that it is a product of the cataclysm of the Russian revolution. They realize that the revolution will produce profound changes in the world, followed by a regeneration of culture. They realize that culture is not permanent but in a continuous process of readjustment. While Western Europe has created many systems of philosophy, the future is not with them. The Eurasians share Alexander Herzen's sentiment that : " history is pounding persistently at our (Russia's) gates." They believe that Russia has already revealed to the world a certain universal truth, as is the task of every great people. They are convinced that the future is with the people of the East who will succeed Western Europe, now in a state of decadence.

THE HUMANIST : These are familiar ideas, which we have heard for a century from your Slavophil and Narodnik philosophers. Strangely enough these ideas are shared by such brilliant minds as Oswald Spengler, who prophecies the decline of the West and the rise of a new culture in the East.

SOCRATOV : The Eurasian philosophers are conscious of the fact that their pronouncements are not strikingly original and therefore they emphasize their differences from the Narodnik and Slavophil thinkers. This difference they find in their changed attitude towards the future economic basis of the expected new Russian civilization. As you know, the Narodniks wanted to preserve and develop the peasant land commune in order to avoid capitalism, but the Eurasians do not consider this a necessity. They do not consider economics to be a determining factor in the quality of a civilization. They lay their emphasis on the recognition of an indigenous culture of the Russian people, and do not think it necessary to follow any of the forms which were produced by other historical cultures. " According to our historiosophic principle," they assert, " we consider it impossible to determine once for all

the content of future Russian life." They also differ from the Slavophils by widening the boundaries of their nationalism. They reject the idea that Russia and the Slavic races are exclusively European. " Russians and the people of the Russian world," they say, " are neither Europeans or Asiatics. In merging our native cultural elements with those which surround us, we are not ashamed to consider ourselves—Eurasians."

THE ROTARIAN: Something like a biological and cultural rotarianism, a veritable melting-pot of races and cultures. I quite welcome the idea thus to unite the people of this country.

SOCRATOV: While making so much of cultural originality and independence from the West, the Eurasians are not so original in their economic thinking. Here they slide back toward " rugged Western individualism," that is into capitalism, although they express it in a rather poetic and philosophic form. They say: " We assert the creative significance of self-governing individuality also for the economic sphere; in this it seems to us we are taking the point of view of consistent individualism."

THE SENATOR: Beautifully expressed! I'll take it down and use it in a campaign speech.

SOCRATOV: The " consistent individualism " of the Eurasians naturally finds no place for socialism in the new Russia. They are grateful to the Bolsheviks for helping them to reveal this " truth " to the world. They are convinced that the Bolsheviks must fail in their socialist experiments and thus serve as a warning for the future.

THE BANKER: We have certainly taken the warning. Our Bolsheviks won't catch us unaware. We are ready for them.

SOCRATOV: The greatest " truth," however, which the Eurasians claim to have revealed to the world is: " *Rejection of socialism and assertion of the Church.*" " We feel that the mystery of our inspired epoch is revealed not only in the boundless flow of mystic experience, but also in the rigid forms of the life of the Church . . . ' the epoch of science ' anew gives place to the ' epoch of faith,' not in the sense of annihila-

ting science, but in the sense of realising the sacrilegous effort to solve by scientific means the basic, final problems of existence."

THE PROFESSOR: Is it possible that such thoughts can be expressed in the twentieth century?

SOCRATOV: The same spirit as the Eurasians' is found in the work of N. Berdyaev, author of the *Philosophy of Inequality*, and of the *New Mediaevalism*, the latter being a treatise on the fate of Russia and Europe. Berdyaev finds solace in "divine ontology," in "intellectual intuitiveness" and in "mystic contemplation." He despises socialism, considering it a stage of capitalism and he eulogizes feudal aristocracy. He says: "There is in aristocracy a divine caprice, an arbitrariness without which no cosmic life, no beauty of the universe is possible." In the same spirit is S. Frank's criticism in the *Principles of Marxism* in which among other arguments, he discovers that Marx was an "incarnation of an Old Testament prophet and at the same time and to a still greater degree, an incarnation of the tempting Satan," and hence the Soviet Union which follows Marx's teachings is a Satanocracy.

THE PROFESSOR: After these "revelations" of the Eurasians and the philosophers of "Inequality" and the "New Medievalism," should one wonder that the communists prefer that these savants continue their philosophizing and propaganda outside the boundaries of the Soviet Union—at least long enough to demonstrate to the world whether it is necessary to replace socialism and science by a medieval church and economic individualism?

SOCRATOV: While the exiled enemies of the proletarian revolution were busying themselves in refuting Marxism and were expounding their morose, mystic philosophy, the revival of the N.E.P. created an atmosphere which found its ideological reflex in a crude, sensual, materialist philosophy. It is known as "Enchmanism" after the name of its author. This vulgar thinking was quite in harmony with the "Nepman"—a new type of "Soviet bourgeois" who rapidly developed during the NEP. Unfortunately there was a danger that this philosophy

would make inroads into the ranks of communist students, because of its bold attack upon ideas and institutions formerly held sacred. This prompted thoughtful communist philosophers to expose the vulgarity of Enchman. N. Bukharin, at the time the leading ideologist of the younger generation of communists, particularly of students, wrote :

> " First of all we face here elements of the *new trader*. The new trader is an individualist. He ' accepts the revolution ' (of course in parenthesis). This new trader is first of all a vulgar materialist ; in everyday common affairs he holds nothing ' sacred ' and ' elevated ' ; he is used to looking at things ' soberly ' ; he is not bound by any traditions of the past, not burdened by folios of wisdom, and heaps of old relics—these the revolution has thrown overboard. He himself is not a descendent of the ' spiritual aristocracy,' no, he has risen from the bottom ; he—the unkempt—has quickly climbed to the top, he is the Russian-American new bourgeois without any intellectual scruples. He wants everything to smell, to feel, and to lick at. He trusts only his own eyes ; in a certain sense he is ' physical.' From whence his *vulgar materialistic superficiality*. Finally, the new trader is *crudely practical* and vulgar ; he is a great simplifier."

THE HUMANIST : Quite a contrast to the aristocratic " Eurasians " and " New Medievalists."

SOCRATOV : The flourishing of the N.E.P. with its shallowing influence on the profounder aspects of life and the pursuits of the empirical natural sciences by Soviet scholars brought philosophy into temporary disrepute. Even among communists voices were heard demanding the scrapping of philosophy, as in the case of S. Minin who already in 1922 declared : " In equipping and completing the construction of our scientific ship, let us throw overboard from the captain's bridge, after religion, philosophy also, without leaving any remnants of it behind." The slogan, " philosophy overboard—science is all-sufficient," found a ready response and was hailed by some

communists as a "true fighting slogan of contemporary revolutionary Marxism."

THE PROFESSOR: Nothing original in that. Most scientists in the West did this long ago, but they find now that science is not quite self-sufficient, hence the reaction from science to mystic philosophy as represented by Sir Arthur Eddington, Millikan, Sir Arthur Thomson, Julian Huxley, J. S. Haldane and others.

SOCRATOV: This over-emphasis on the empirical sciences and the desire to simplify theoretic thought found in our country its most glaring reflection in the so-called mechanistic movement. It presents a peculiar revision of dialectical materialism and has given us real concern. It was led by the late I. Stepanov, a highly respected communist. Because of his prestige, it gained a large following, particularly among natural scientists and students of science. For a time it threatened to split the ideological leadership of the communist movement. The controversy which developed, particularly after 1924, lasted for almost five years, but finally ended with a complete victory of dialectic materialism over the mechanistic heresy. The defeat was made possible chiefly by the timely publication of F. Engel's *Natur Dialectic*, commonly translated as the *Dialectics of Nature*, a posthumous philosophic work of great interest and importance to the development of dialectic materialism. I frequently quoted from it in presenting the contribution of Marx and Engels to communist philosophy. This work was first published in a Russian translation by our Marx and Engels' Institute, which obtained photostatic copies of the original from the social-democratic archives in Berlin. In this volume, Engels reinterprets Hegelian dialectics, materialistically on the background of natural science and shows dialectics to be an excellent method for the study of nature, making it possible to synthesize the fragmentary knowledge of the empirical sciences and to open the way to new discoveries. In this work he also criticizes vulgar mechanistic materialism, of which the new mechanistic materialism is but a modernized version.

THE REFORMIST: This must have been a blow to your

mechanists. I wonder why this work of Engels was kept in the archives for such a long time and not published together with some of his other works by the German Social-Democratic Party.

SOCRATOV: Some fragments of it were published, but the entire work was considered out of date since German socialist scholars themselves were in the trap of the non-philosophical scientific mood and considered Engel's work a belated " Naturphilosophie " for which there was no need in modern natural science. Another important factor which helped to defeat the mechanists was the publication of Lenin's notes " On Dialectics " which left no doubt where Lenin stood in this important philosophic question. The weighty arguments of Engels and Lenin in support of the dialectical philosophy and their criticism of shallow empiricism and vulgar materialism broke the back of the mechanistic heresy and led to the triumph of the dialecticians. The controversy with the mechanists which was carried into open discussion before the public, aroused much interest in philosophy and popularized its study.

THE PROFESSOR: I wanted to ask you about your system of teaching philosophy to the masses. Tell us a little about it.

SOCRATOV: The increasing interest in philosophy and the realization of its importance as a guide in the intricate task of socialist reconstruction and the building of a new civilization and culture, contributed to a rapid spread of its teaching and development in specially founded institutions of higher learning, particularly in the Communist Academy and in the Institute of Red Professors. A number of publications such as *The Messenger of the Communist Academy*, *Under the Banner of Marxism*, *The Bolshevik* and others appeared. The founding of a philosophical propaganda organization known as the " Society of Militant Dialectical Materialists " has contributed much to the spread and popularization of dialectical materialism. There are nuclei of this society in most higher institutions of learning. Members of the society visit factories and institutions and deliver lectures on philosophy. If a sufficient number of the workers become interested, study groups are

organized in the plants, which pursue systematic study of problems in philosophy. The labour unions, the popular press, and of course all party and Komsomol organizations give special study to the subject of communist theory. Courses in philosophy are obligatory upon every student in the higher schools of every faculty whether in the humanistic arts, in science, technique, or the fine arts.

THE BANKER : Do you mean to say that your movie actresses are getting courses in dialectical philosophy ?

SOCRATOV : They certainly are, and not only when they are studying in special schools but even after they join the union of the workers of the stage.

THE ROTARIAN : I'd like to see our Hollywood beauties sit down to a course in dialectic materialism. Wouldn't that be a joke !

THE PROFESSOR : How would you characterize the present situation in your philosophic development ?

SOCRATOV : During last year we went through a heated controversy which has gone down in our philosophical history as the controversy relating to " The new turn on the philosophical front." It was a battle with the old leadership in philosophy which followed the traditions of Plekhanov rather than Lenin, i.e. it emphasized the academic aspects of philosophy and failed to adjust itself to the rapidly changing situation in our struggle for the realization of socialism. It thus drifted into what was termed " Menshevik idealism." Instead of leading in the process of unfolding socialism, it was lagging behind, which is not our way of looking at the function of philosophy. The old leadership rendered great service in defending dialectical materialism against its revision by the mechanists, but in doing so, it lost its perspective in relation to the imminent problems of life. It became academic. Our present problems are to conserve and deepen our victory over the mechanistic heresy ; next to develop the philosophic heritage of Marx and particularly of Lenin, following the programme which he himself has given us in his " philosophical will " ; finally we must be continually on guard to remain true to our principal

task, so well expressed in Marx's last theses on Feuerbach : " Philosophers have only explained the world in different ways, the task is to change it."

THE PROFESSOR : Some of these problems are also our problems. The mechanistic philosophy which consciously or unconsciously controls empirical science in the West is breaking down. As a result there is confusion and a drift into mysticism on the part of leading scientists who know no alternative to mechanistic philosophy other than extreme philosophical idealism and mysticism. If you become conscious of the need for a new turn on the philosophical front, we no less are in need of it. I consider it highly important that we should know a little more about these philosophical struggles which you have passed through. The knowledge may help us to get out of the theoretical mire in which we find ourselves to-day.

THE REFORMIST : I agree with the Professor. We Western socialists feel keenly the philosophic crisis which is upon us. As a result most of us have drifted into a philosophic agnosticism, and have very little fighting philosophy left.

THE LEADER : If I understand your sentiments correctly, you wish us to take up the discussion of what comrade Socratov termed the " mechanistic heresy " in Marxian philosophy. If there is no objection, we will go on with that subject to-morrow.

DIALOGUE XIV

In which the Mechanistic Trend in Philosophic Materialism is set forth.

THE PROFESSOR: Our discussion of the sources of philosophical materialism has shown us that modern materialist philosophy originated in the French philosophy of enlightenment of the eighteenth century. In its dialectical aspect it is traced directly to Hegel. French materialism is an outgrowth of the Newtonian mechanics. Dialectical materialism is a reinterpretation of Hegelian dialectics through Feuerbach, Marx and Engels. It appears thus, that the mechanistic and dialectic trends coexisted during the past century and so they were absorbed in the socialist movement. It is not surprising, therefore, that both should reappear in the development of communist philosophy at the present time.

THE REFORMIST: If I remember rightly, Engels' controversy with Duehring in the seventies was a conflict between these two trends in materialist philosophy. Engels defended the dialectical position against Duehring's mechanism.

THE PROFESSOR: French and English positivism and evolutionary empiricism, which until recently were popular among natural scientists in all countries, are essentially mechanistic philosophies, although veiled in a cautious agnosticism. Apparently all these trends have also affected Soviet philosophers and we hope that Socratov will enlighten us on these interesting and important developments.

SOCRATOV: The simplicity of the mechanistic theory has always been the cause of its popularity. It has also become a pitfall to communist thinkers who were not thoroughly schooled in Hegelian and Marxian dialectics and in Leninism.

The mechanistic trend is dangerous, not only because mechanist materialism has been discredited by modern natural science, but also and chiefly because, as we shall see, its philosophical implications have far reaching consequences for revolutionary communism. I have already indicated that its revival in communist philosophy took place upon the social economic background of the N.E.P. and of the temporary stabilization of capitalism in the West after the revolutionary upheavals following the World War. This stabilization was understood by many as a surrender to " evolutionary " methods and the scrapping of revolution as a means to attaining socialism. It is no accident therefore that the mechanistic-dialectical controversy was at its height between 1924-1929.

THE BANKER : 1929, the black year in Wall Street ! Strange that that should coincide with a crash in philosophy !

SOCRATOV : In 1929 an all-union conference of representatives of Marxo-Leninist institutions was called. After heated debates the convention condemned the mechanistic trend as incompatible with the philosophy of communism—that is with dialectical materialism.

THE HUMANIST : A veritable Council of Nicea ! And who were your Athanasius and Arius in this controversy for orthodoxy ?

SOCRATOV : The leaders of the mechanists were A. K. Timiryasev, a professor of physics, and Professor V. Sarobyanov, both of whom remain the leading interpreters of this trend. The mechanist philosophy was popular among students of natural science generally, and counted as its adherents many well-known communist philosophers and scholars, including the influential I. Stepanov who died just before the conference assembled. The mechanists stood : (1) for the independence of natural science from any philosophy ; (2) against revisionist Marxism as an independent philosophy ; (3) for replacing philosophy by some of the general conclusions of natural science ; and (4) for accepting specifically as a general theory of Marxism the materialistic or economic interpretation of history. On these principles stood the late I. Stepanov. The

opposition to the mechanists was led by A. Deborin and the so-called " Deborin " school of dialectical materialism. For the five years previous to this conference a whole literature had developed which reflects the ideas of the contending parties. At the centre of discussion between the mechanists and dialecticians stands the so-called problem of the *reduction* of phenomena to the common denominator of the simplest terms. The mechanists uphold the necessity and possibility of such a reduction and consider it the chief task of modern science. The dialecticians on the contrary work upwards ; they follow the creative or synthetic process, considering this to be the most important task.

THE SENATOR : What do you mean by reduction ? Reduction of what ? Give us an illustration.

SOCRATOV : The simplest laws of motion concern the mechanical motion of bodies in space and are studied by the science of mechanics. The most complex parts of moving matter such as the molecule, the atom and the electron are studied by physics and chemistry and the more complex phenomena of living organisms and of human society are correspondingly studied in the biological and social sciences. This well-known and generally recognized hierarchy of the sciences mechanistic philosophy approaches with a theory of its own. It seeks to reduce the complex to the simple and explains the former in terms of the latter. Science has established that even the most complex organisms consist of a relatively small number of chemical elements which themselves consist of atoms. These in turn are reduced to electrons and protons and these latter the mechanists consider the indivisible units of all forms of matter. Hence, they argue, at the basis of all organic and social phenomena are found, in the last analysis, the same ultimate elements and the complex laws governing the behaviour of living matter may be *reduced* to the simpler physio-chemical laws and these in turn to the most simple laws of mechanical motion.

THE HUMANIST : A rather unproven hypothesis.

SOCRATOV : The mechanists conceded that this process of

reducing complex phenomena to mechanical motion has as yet not been experimentally verified, but they comfort themselves by pointing to the trend of natural science which, they claim, is advancing step by step in this direction. Thus the rigid boundaries between biology and chemistry on the one hand and between chemistry and physics on the other have already disappeared. Why then should we doubt that before long the study of life will be a part of physics and finally of mechanics? A similar transition may take place in the study of social phenomena, which may be reduced to bio-social mechanics.

THE PROFESSOR: I have read N. Bukharin's *Historical Materialism*, which so far as I know is the only book in English which attempts to present communist philosophy in a more or less systematic manner. My impression is that Bukharin has essentially this mechanistic approach which you now condemn.

SOCRATOV: To begin with, Bukharin flirted with a mechanistic terminology. "Not so long ago," he says, "almost all Marxians objected to mechanical terminology owing to the persistence of the ancient conception of an atom as a detached, isolated particle. But now that we have the electron theory, which represents atoms as complete solar systems, we have no reason to shun this mechanical terminology." At the time, Bukharin hardly suspected that his line of reasoning went far beyond the mechanical terminology and really meant a mechanistic philosophy which is intrinsically opposed to dialectical materialism. Stepanov also was convinced that contemporary natural science was persistently advancing in this direction, and that the evolution of the world is a relatively simple physico-chemical process. L. Axelrod also shares this point of view, saying: "The mechanistic concept of the world which rejects all types of idealism and theology, and which considers it in principle possible to know the laws of nature by means of greater and greater reduction of the variety to a general materialist basis was and remains till now the foundation of materialism." Sarobyanov also stands on this position when he insists that "Basically materialism differs from other

teachings in so far as it recognizes that every action of the living organism is the action of a machine, i.e. of a mechanism." The refusal of the dialecticians to accept this point of view, the mechanists brand as the " vitalist heresy."

THE ROTARIAN : What kind is that ?

SOCRATOV : " Vitalists " are those biologists who consider that there is an impassable gulf between the organic and the inorganic, and look upon " life " as something specifically independent, having no continuity with the inorganic. They deny transitional stages and connections of any kind. Life is a mysterious, unknown force and like God, must remain unknown. " The dialecticians," says Stepanov, " merge altogether with the vitalists, since they repeat all the claims and contentions of the vitalists ; ' life is a *specific* quality not reducible to physics and chemistry.' " Thus to the mechanists a vitalist is anyone who refuses to accept the hypothesis that the laws of life can be reduced to a physio-chemical basis and finally to the laws of mechanics.

THE REFORMIST : What do the dialecticians have to say against these charges of the mechanists ?

SOCRATOV : In their counter attack, the dialecticians charge the mechanists with being reactionaries in science, reverting to the position of the vulgar materialism of a century ago. They remind them that Engels waged war against this mechanical materialism and against the attempt to reduce complex organic phenomena to physics and chemistry. Engels' weapon was materialist dialectics which, while beginning with an analysis of phenomena, does not stop there, as the mechanists do, but proceeds to a higher synthesis which is always something new and specific in quality, quite different from its antecedent. In his *Dialectics of Nature* he says : " If chemistry should succeed in preparing albumen, then chemistry will pass beyond its own limits. It penetrates into the wide sphere of organic life. Physiology is of course physics and particularly the chemistry of living bodies, but together with this it ceases to be purely chemistry ; on the one hand the sphere of its activity is here limited, on the other it rises to a higher stage."

Engels recognizes that there is a transition, a contact between the biological and the physio-chemical, the higher forms having for their antecedents the lower, but at the same time they are specifically something different, a new synthesis and cannot be reduced to simple mechanical laws. The mechanists see only the sameness, the continuity and not the difference between the inorganic and the organic ; but to the dialectical materialist life is a new synthesis for which the inorganic is a necessary condition, an antecedent stage, but not the same thing, nor can it be reduced to it.

THE HUMANIST : There is good sense in this position of the dialecticians. Mere analysis does not get you anywhere, if no synthesis follows. The great humanist, Goethe, profoundly recognized this truth, when he said : " The century which exclusively devotes itself to analysis and, as it were, is afraid of synthesis is not on the right track ; since only both together, exhalation and inhalation, make up the life of science."

SOCRATOV : In order to understand and appreciate fully the meaning of synthesis it is necessary to remember that the whole is more than a simple summing up of its parts. Man is more than the sum total of the elements which compose his organism. The nature of a thing depends on the *relations* of its parts. This is even true of inorganic mechanisms. The watch is only a watch if its parts are set in proper relation. Otherwise it is only so many parts. The mechanists fail to see the importance of this point. They concentrate their efforts on reducing organisms to the elements which compose them, but they fail to work upwards and see how the whole is developing and what new specific qualities new relations create. This is undoubtedly a great error on the part of the mechanists and the merit of the dialecticians is that they have learned to synthesize the two aspects of quality and quantity, the common and the specific, in the creative process.

THE PROFESSOR : An illuminating analysis of the initial difference between these two trends in your philosophy. Now I am curious to learn how these differences affected other categories of thought.

SOCRATOV : *Matter* and *motion* are two important philosophical categories, over which there is essential disagreement between the mechanists and the dialecticians. The latter hold that matter is inseparable from motion. No matter exists without motion. Motion is its basic attribute, a *conditio sine qua non* of its existence. The mechanists failed to grasp this truth and understand motion only in physico-chemical terms, as defined for example by Thomas Hobbes, who said that motion is a continuous change of place, that is, the leaving of one place and the reaching of another. Thus motion is a mechanical process which can commence only through the application of external force—which permits us to think of matter without motion. The dialecticians on the contrary trace their philosophical conception of matter and motion back to Bacon who, as Marx expressed it, thought of motion as the first and chief intrinsic characteristic of matter, not only mechanical or mathematical motion, but motion as an urge, as a living spirit, as tension, as " suffering "—to use the language of Jacob Boehme. Engels considered the dialectical conception of matter and motion precisely in this same manner. Motion was for him an immanent attribute of matter embracing all changes which take place in the universe, beginning with simple replacement and ending with thinking. " The motion of matter," he says, " is not reduced only to crude mechanical movement, to simple replacement. The movement of matter is also heat and light, electric and magnetic tension, chemical affinity and disintegration, life and finally consciousness."

THE PROFESSOR : It is clear that these two views have nothing in common and if one is made the premise of reasoning, it will lead in an altogether different direction from the other.

SOCRATOV : Mechanists and dialecticians differ also in respect to their understanding of the *nature of matter*. To the mechanists matter consists of some final, indivisible element of being and they accept the electron and the proton as the uniform smallest particles, as the " bricks " of the universe.

THE ROTARIAN : I like that " bricks of the universe." It sounds so practical.

SOCRATOV : The dialecticians consider this concept false and precarious, placing philosophy at the mercy of natural science, i.e. in the same position in which the " atomists " found themselves at the time of the discovery of the electron. Some new discovery may remove the electron as the final " brick."

THE PROFESSOR : As a matter of fact this has taken place with the so-called " wave and corpuscular theory of matter " which does not consider the electron as the final indivisible unit of matter.

SOCRATOV : Dialectical materialism as a philosophy must not only be independent of natural science, but must also lead it on to new discoveries. The dialecticians present four theses in respect of matter which they consider vital to their philosophy : (1) Matter has objective, real existence in time and space. (2) It is eternally in motion and changing. (3) It is not only quantitatively but qualitatively definable, has variety and excludes the possibility of the absolute sameness of any " smallest particle." (4) It is inexhaustible and incompatible with any concept of " last instances " or final elements and of any absolute beginning or absolute end. The dialectician considers it metaphysical and not scientific to talk of matter " as such " (*an sich*) and when Stepanov writes : " Matter as such sensibly exists for us as negative electrons and positive nuclei," he is reminded of Engels' criticism : " That matter as such is a pure creation of thought and abstraction . . . Matter as such is something without quality but actual objects in the world are never without quality."

THE REFORMIST : The mechanists were certainly hard pressed, I wonder that they survived at all.

SOCRATOV : They made feeble attempts to find support in Engels' and Lenin's writings but with little success. To Lenin, as we already know, matter was an " objective reality existing independent of human consciousness and reflecting it," and he warned against the metaphysical pitfalls of postulating any " unchangeable," " final," " uniform," " bricks of the universe," or any " matter as such " taken abstractly and deprived of concrete form. The position of the mechanists, as Engels

had already observed, reverts to the old Pythagorean idea of fixed quantity or number as the essence of things. This the mechanists themselves begin to realize. Stepanov, for example, writes : " Is it not necessary to say that the theory of structure of matter reverts to Pythagoras for whom the essence of things is number, a quantitative, definite thing ? If it does, then it is on the basis of all the scientific achievements of the enormous period following Pythogaras."

THE HUMANIST : It looks as though the mechanists, against their will and desire had landed in the other extreme from which they worked so hard to escape : I mean in Pythagorean idealism. It is an old story—extremes meet !

THE PROFESSOR : In my opinion the criterion of orthodoxy in dialectical materialism is a correct understanding of the laws of dialectics, and the principal categories of dialectical logic. I wonder what the position of the mechanists was on this important matter ?

SOCRATOV : The mechanists of course pretended to be dialecticians, but we consider their dialectics a fraud, since there is nothing dialectical in it except the terminology. At the heart of dialectics, as you may remember, is the idea of the interpenetration and unity of opposites. How do the mechanists understand this law ? They recognize opposites in the struggle of two independent forces pitted against each other. The mechanistic relation expresses itself on the one hand in the theory of equilibration ; on the other in the likening of every contradiction to antagonism and conflict. The dialectic unity of opposites they have not grasped. Let us take such a classical example as the category of subject and object. The mechanists simply reduce the subjective to the objective. The object is the real, not the subject. In this respect, they reason very much like the idealists who reduce everything to the subject, denying a real, objective world. Both the mechanists and the idealists alike speak about the *sameness* of subject and object. The dialectical materialist on the contrary emphasizes the *unity* of subject and object. In this manner the mechanist comes to the position of the idealist in formal

logic. According to this reasoning there is an exclusion of opposites, a thing is either one or the other, it is either subject or object, yes or no. To the dialectical materialist these oppositions are not paradoxical. Life to us is a unity of opposites, at any given moment it appears the same and also different. Lenin used this homely illustration—" Ivan is a man. Ivan is something specific. Man is general. The specific and the general are opposites, yet in Ivan the man they are in unity."

THE ROTARIAN : How simple this is, yet for over a week we have been talking dialectics and only now do I see the point about his unity of opposites.

SOCRATOV : The mechanist uses the term " unity of opposites." But as we have seen, their unity is not an inner unity, it is as Bukharin has well illustrated, an interaction of life with its environment. The conflict of two forces, the inner and the outer, which strive to establish an equilibrium.

THE PROFESSOR : As I remember, this idea of equilibrium penetrates all Bukharin's thinking. It is at the heart of his system.

SOCRATOV : For this reason we consider his system mechanistic ; an equilibrium of forces is a mechanical relation, not an inner growth.

THE SENATOR : I cannot quite see why there should be such an opposition to this theory of equilibrium. In my own thinking, I find it very helpful. Our theory of government is based on it. I call it a moving equilibrium or as we ordinarily say a " government of checks and balances." Yet this position does not reduce us to materialists and what you call mechanists. We hold firmly to our ideals of democracy. We are idealists.

SOCRATOV : It may seem paradoxical to you, but it is a fact that reasoning from mechanistic premises inevitably leads to the same conclusion as reasoning from metaphysical idealistic premises. Both are static ; they can only adjust forces, transform them from one arrangement to another, and these are not organic changes. But you were asking about Bukharin. Abroad he is the best known of all our thinkers, since his

works have been translated into English. It is necessary, therefore, to point out the difference between dialectical materialism and the system he presents in *Historical Materialism*. On page 73 of this work, Bukharin thus interprets the dialectic law of the unity of opposites. " If there were no conflict," he says, " no clash of forces, the world would be in a condition of unchanging stable equilibrium, i.e. complete and absolute permanence. . . . It is certain that such an absolute state of rest cannot possibly exist. We must therefore reject a position in which there is no contradiction between opposing and colliding forces, no disturbance of equilibrium." Bukharin illustrates his position by examples of " adaptation " in biology, and by the equilibrium of the solar system, and carries these analogies into social relations, showing that society " in one way or another is in equilibrium with nature." " In all these examples," concludes Bukharin, " it is clear that we are dealing with one phenomenon, that of *equilibrium*. This being the case, where do the contradictions come in ? For there is no doubt that conflict is a disturbance of equilibrium." Expressing this theory in dialectical terminology, he considers that there are states of " rest " when the " conflict " of opposing forces is concealed. Any change of forces disturbs the equilibrium which is in a state of " internal contradiction." The newly established equilibrium is the new basis, consisting of the readjusted forces. " It follows—concludes Bukharin—that the ' conflict,' the ' contradiction,' i.e. the antagonism of forces acting in various directions, determines the motion of the system."

THE PROFESSOR : Pure old-fashioned mechanics ! He reduces the dialectic process to a mechanistic scheme.

SOCRATOV : The dialecticians charge Bukharin with the mechanistic heresy because, first, in his scheme the *qualitative* aspect in evolution disappears since mechanics knows only quantities ; secondly, his theory of equilibration knows only " rest " and " motion," which is quite different from the " immanent movement " emphasized by the Marxo-Leninist scheme ; thirdly, dialectic contradiction, which is a unity of

mutually interpenetrating opposites, is reduced to a conflict of oppositely directed forces, i.e. to a mechanistic collision, neither does he differentiate between organic and inorganic forces which to a dialectician present different qualities ; fourthly, the dialectic concept presupposes an inner activity which in Bukharin's scheme disappears altogether, giving place to the working of outer forces ; finally, Bukharin's scheme, presupposing only quantitative changes of forces, ignores the qualitative changes and hence the appearance of new qualities becomes altogether impossible from the point of view of his mechanistic theory of equilibration.

THE REFORMIST : Do you think that Bukharin's programme of moderation or what you call " the tendency to the right," has anything in common with his mechanistic theory ?

SOCRATOV : True to his theory of equilibration of forces, Bukharin believed it possible to absorb the opposing anti-social forces of the village and he advanced the slogan of " the Kulak's growth into socialism," which was in direct opposition to the party's programme of the " destruction of the Kulaks as a class on the basis of collectivisation." Bukharin's theory evaluated the party programme as a violent disturbance of the moving equilibrium which was established by the revolution. In his opinion, after the revolution the proletarian class became the centre of gravitation, a force strong enough to absorb the remnants of the shattered classes. Similarly, his " theory of organized capitalism " was based on his idea of the equilibrium of the inner monopolistic forces of capitalist countries. This equilibrium in his opinion could only be upset by the intensifying rivalry between capitalist countries on the foreign market. Practically this means a denial of the presence of inner contradictions within the capitalist system, and a shifting of them beyond national boundaries. This is of course not our point of view. Such are some of the implications of the mechanist theory. It contradicts the revolutionary outlook and has therefore been condemned as a dangerous heresy.

THE HUMANIST : How would you differentiate Bukharin from the other mechanists ?

SOCRATOV : Their difference is rather one of the subject matter treated. While Bukharin emphasized the idea of equilibrium others stressed such logical categories as " accident and necessity," " subjectivism and relativism," others again applied mechanism to the field of natural science and psychology.

THE PROFESSOR : Would you tell us briefly their opinions on some of these problems ?

SOCRATOV : The position of the mechanist is that there is no accident. Our use of the term accident only expresses our ignorance of the laws which govern the appearance of the unexpected. To be a materialist, the mechanists say, is to deny the accidental, or as L. Axelrod puts it : " the soul of materialism is mechanistic causation." Dialecticians are definitely opposed to this point of view. They point to modern science as well as to the classics of dialectical materialism, both of which refute the mechanistic conception of causation. Already Hegel had pointed out that the effect is not merely the same as the cause, but also different. This may be observed in nature, in the experience of the individual and in the experience of society. " Self-development " and " self-movement," due to immanent forces which the dialecticians recognize, are more than mechanical actions and reactions. The behaviour of matter, as modern science has demonstrated, is not an unbroken continuity. It has its " leaps " and " mutations." This fact has upset the philosophically agnostic scientist, has driven some into despair or into accepting a pluralist universe, as for example Bertrand Russell does, to whom " the universe is all spots and jumps." The response of an individual to a stimulus is sometimes diametrically opposed to the commonly expected. " Variation " which may be considered an expression of the " accidental " is an integral part of the process of becoming. Hence the accidental may be defined as a cause which is not directly related to the lawful inner development of a given phenomenon. It appears as something external in relation to it. That is to say there may be two or more quite independent series of causes and effects which may intersect, and this intersection is the accidental.

THE BANKER : A friend of mine, a prominent member of the New York Stock Exchange with whom I had frequent business relations, had a serious automobile accident. He had a blow-out just as his car was approaching a railway crossing and this unexpected break-down made it impossible to dodge the train, which struck his car and instantly killed him. Here, as you say, were two independent causal series. The train follows its own course, running straight along its track and the auto-car has its course running at right angles to that of the train. The unfortunate meeting of these two independent forces, with the consequent killing of my friend became a new cause of most complicated affairs. It seriously disturbed the quotations on the stock market, it caused a long and expensive law suit, between the railway company and the family of my late friend, and so on.

THE SENATOR : During my term in the Senate, I once lost a bill because of an automobile accident which made it impossible for some senators to be present at the session when the vote was taken.

SOCRATOV : We could all add innumerable examples from our own experience or from history. The point, however, is that while the dialectician accepts the accidental as a special form of necessity, in dialectical causation, the mechanist denies the inner relation between necessity and accident. Engels presents a very good illustration from Darwin's theory of natural selection. He says :

> " Darwin in his epoch-making work proceeds from an exceedingly broad factual basis, resting upon accident. Precisely the unnoticable, occasional differences in individuals of separate species, differences that may at length amount to a change in the very nature of the species, the most proximate cause of which may be shown only in very rare cases—precisely these facts compelled him to doubt the former basis of any law in biology, doubt the concept of species, its former metaphysical unchangeableness and permanence."

Marx equally appreciated the role of accident in history. The

behaviour of individuals while not changing the process as a whole may hamper its course and be responsible for distinct concrete changes and forms. In a letter to his friend Kugelman, Marx writes these significant words :

> "To make world history would, of course be quite convenient, if the struggle be undertaken only under conditions of infallibly favourable chances. On the other hand, history would have a very mystical character, if ' accidents ' had played no part. These accidents enter, of course, by themselves as a component part into the general process of development, being outweighed by other accidents. But the acceleration and the retardation depend to a considerable degree on these ' accidents ' among which figures also such ' accidents ' as the characters of the people who stand at the head of the movement."

Accident and necessity are opposites, but in the process of becoming they interpenetrate, supplement each other and thus contribute towards a new synthesis. In this lies their meaning for the dialectic process.

THE PROFESSOR : The problem of subjectivism and relativism with its many implications for social ethics is a subject in which I am particularly interested and which I think we should still discuss to-day.

SOCRATOV : We already know that the philosophic controversy on the problem of subjective and objective truth, dates back to the controversy of Plekhanov with the Narodniks in the last quarter of the last century and to Lenin's struggle with the empirio-critics of the Bogdanov school. One of the important problems in this controversy is the question of the reality of quality. The Marxian school stand for the objectivity of quality.

THE HUMANIST : You don't mean to say that qualities like colour, tone, heat, and cold are anything more than subjective sensations ?

SOCRATOV : I mean to say that all so-called secondary qualities including colour, tone, and temperature have a real objective basis. Some mechanists, as well as the idealists, do not share

this position. Outstanding among the mechanists in this respect is Sarabyanov. He maintains that all qualitative differences are subjectively conditioned and socially agreed upon. " Good " and " evil," " life " and " death " are such purely relative qualities. " I took the truth," says Sarabyanov, " as an ideological form, as a reflex in our heads and showed that there is no truth outside of man himself, no non-subjective truth, but since there is truth which *corresponds* to objective processes, it more or less correctly reflects this objective process and therefore we call it objective truth." This, of course, is not the teaching of dialectical materialism. Lenin insisted that qualities and values like " good " and " bad ", though they presuppose a social relation, are not reducible to it. These qualities have an objective basis which we call " good " or " bad."

THE PROFESSOR: Using the language of Hegel, you could say that before it is " a thing for us," i.e. a thing which we take in a definite relation, it must previously have been " a thing independent of us."

SOCRATOV: Quite so, otherwise we should have to recognize its complete relativity, which is not a Marxian doctrine. Lenin in his controversy with the empirico-critics insisted that to take relativism as the basis of one's theory of knowledge is to condemn oneself to absolute scepticism, agnosticism and sophistry. The decisive battle between the mechanists and the dialecticians was fought at the April conference of the Marxo-Leninist Scientific Institutions held in 1929 in Moscow. In the paper presented by A. Deborin it was made clear that the difference between the dialecticians and the mechanists consisted in their attitude towards facts. " The mechanists," said Deborin, " stand on the basis of bare facts, revealing an incomprehensible fear before *theoretic* thought, but we dialecticians ' tie ' facts with theory, understanding these as a unity and as a relation." In the long discussion which continued for several days, the mechanists acknowledged their defeat and sought cover by pointing to their merits, demonstrated in their fight against idealism, particularly in its religious form.

They bitterly complained that the dialecticians were much more intolerant to the mechanistic materialists than they were to the idealist schools and that they were inactive in anti-religious propaganda.

THE REFORMIST: It is rather peculiar that mechanists should be the more active propagandists of their ideas. What is the outlook for future collaboration between these contending factions of philosophic thought?

SOCRATOV: Dialectical materialism formed itself as a historic synthesis at the juncture of two lines of development, of the two principal trends in philosophy. It is the result of a union of materialism and dialectics, of a materialism which heretofore was not dialectical with a dialectics which up to then was related to idealism. The materialists, beginning with Democritus, through Hobbes, Spinoza and the French materialists were all undialectical. The dialecticians on the other hand had their own lineage. Beginning with Socrates, and descending through Aristotle to Hegel, their dialectics was founded upon an idealistic basis. In Marx and Engels the dialectic and materialist philosophies were elevated to a new synthesis in dialectical materialism. It is the highest synthetic unity of the two mightiest currents of philosophic thought. Owing to defective training and temperament some Marxists are inclined to emphasize one or the other aspect of this synthetic unity. This results in the appearance of the mechanist and idealist heresies in dialectical materialism and calls for continuous vigilance.

THE PROFESSOR: I think I express the sentiment of the group when I say that we have greatly benefited by to-day's discussion. Though dealing with abstract categories we have seen that even the most abstract ideas may have far reaching implications.

THE HUMANIST: We are now ready to be informed about the "New Turn on the Philosophic Front," which I hope will also bring us to some of the problems of applied philosophy.

THE LEADER: There can hardly be any objection to this proposal; so we shall adjourn till to-morrow.

DIALOGUE XV

In which the New Turn on the Philosophic Front is discussed.

THE LEADER: We have been meeting regularly for the last two weeks to discuss revolutionary philosophy. We have learned something of its historic background, its sources and its principal theories. To some this has been a considerable tax on their patience. This will be the last discussion of theory. After to-day we shall take up some of the problems which we might term problems of applied philosophy.

SOCRATOV: In spreaking about the new turn on the philosophic front, we must remind ourselves of some of the important things which have happened in recent years. The most significant of these is the magnificent industrial and agricultural reconstruction plan inaugurated in 1928, and known as the Five Year Plan. Without exaggeration, it represents a new epoch, not only in the life of the Soviet Union, but for the whole world. Its real meaning is more than industrialization in town and village. To us communists it means the laying of a firm foundation for the new socialist order with its far reaching consequences in every phase of the life and thought of the people.

THE PROFESSOR: I should like to call your attention to the fact that the introduction of the five year programme synchronizes with the turning-point in the post-war economic revival in capitalist countries. When you passed the Five Year Plan, the rest of the world thought it a bit of communist propaganda. Our economists demonstrated that this was a programme not for five but for twenty years, provided the capitalist countries would extend credit and confidence to the scheme. Since then

the curve of capitalist prosperity has been rapidly and steadily on the downward trend, with a corresponding upward trend in the curve of your economic development. To me this raises the question as to the trustworthiness of what we have become accustomed to call the laws of economics. Anyhow, for the present Marx's doctrine of recurrent economic crises and their progressive intensification seems to run true to form.

THE SENATOR: Why all this pessimism? Our president has repeatedly stated that our government and business leaders have the situation well in hand and that we soon shall start upon a new wave of unprecedented prosperity which will demonstrate the robustness and vitality of our democracy. This will silence the Marxian prophets who are continually harping on the decline of capitalism.

THE REFORMIST: If we begin to discuss the differences and the merits of socialism and capitalism we will never get to the "new turn on the philosophic front." Let Socratov continue.

SOCRATOV: I was about to say that the scheme of the Five Year Plan has its underlying philosophy and is developing into a veritable science of "socialist planning." It might be expected that the philosophical leadership of the Communist Academy, which is designed to guide the theory of creative work in the Soviet Union, should have developed the philosophy of the creative era for which the first Five Year Plan is but the overture. Unfortunately, this has not been the case. You will remember that at the time when the State planning commission was busy with its planning work, the philosophers were divided into contending camps of mechanists and dialecticians. This intense inner struggle exhausted the venerable philosophers of the old school and they overlooked the opening of the creative era of socialism. They did not recognize the signs of the times, which clearly indicated that a new quality had appeared in the life of the Soviet Union. This new quality, which we may call the epoch of creative socialism, was pregnant with far reaching implications, touching every interest in the life of our people and of the proletarians of the world. This fact was observed by Comrade Stalin and was

quickly realised by the younger generation of communist philosophers who launched a campaign of criticism generally known as " the struggle for a turn on the philosophic front."

THE HUMANIST : I have heard about Stalin's timely interference in this problem of applying theory to creative work, but I do not know exactly what he said to start the new controversy.

SOCRATOV : In December, 1929, Stalin addressed a conference of Marxian agrarian scientists in which he pointed out that the development of communist theory was not keeping step with the development of the actual constructive work of socialism. " It must be recognized," he said, " that theoretical thought does not keep up with our practical achievements, that there is a certain hiatus between our practical attainments and the development of theoretic work, which should not merely keep up with the practical, but indeed precede it by arming our practitioners in their struggle for the victory of socialism." Encouraged by these observations of Stalin, the communist party organization of the philosophical section of the Institute of Red Professors called attention to the necessity for a radical change " on the philosophical front " as communists like to term this field as well as the other fields of their activities. The initial steps in the criticism of the old leadership were taken in an article published in *Pravda* (June 7th, 1930) signed by M. Mitin, V. Ralsevich and P. Youdin, entitled, " On the New Problem of Marxo-Leninist Philosophy."

THE REFORMIST : What was the gist of this article ?

SOCRATOV : In their statement the authors emphasized that on the occasion of the 16th party conference, the whole party should give their attention to the conditions on the " theoretic front," where the situation was not altogether satisfactory. The article pointed out that the present period of " mighty transition " had produced titanic problems in socialist reconstruction and the class struggle, with the shifting of classes as well as problems in contemporary imperialism. In all these questions, they held, theory is lagging behind actual achievements. The Marxo-Leninist or communist philosophy which

operates with the theoretical weapon of dialectics makes it possible correctly to grasp actual life and to observe its revolutionary changes. The new trend of socialist reconstruction calls equally for a *reconstruction of science* which must be accomplished by introducing the methods of dialectical materialism. On the other hand, an offensive by communist philosophy will intensify the class struggle in science, which already shows a desperate resistance on the part of the reactionary elements of the old scientific world. The authors also showed the total failure of the old philosophic leadership to expose in time the theoretic principles and errors of Trotskyism.

THE REFORMIST : And what were these deadly sins in Trotsky's theory ?

SOCRATOV : Philosophically we consider Trotskyism basically anti-dialectical and eclectic since it contains elements of mechanistic materialism and of philosophic idealism. This creates the problem of the struggle on " two fronts " which the authors of the article emphasize. Both trends ignored the dialectics of the transitional period from the N.E.P. to the new construction era. These involved many problems of historic materialism, with its goal—the abolition of classes. In conclusion, the authors urged the necessity of grasping Lenin's idea of partisan philosophy and fully developing his philosophic legacy with its profound conception by the application of dialectical materialism. Lenin and Plekhanov are becoming an issue in communist philosophy which must not be ignored, since in their names are focussed the division lines of the present trends of Marxian philosophic thought. These are the trends of Marxo-Leninism and of Plekhanov-Menshevik idealism, the latter having found its reflection in the Deborin School. A very important fact in connection with the publication of this article was the editorial support of *Pravda* to the arguments of the authors. This fact made it more than the opinion of the authors, it became the voice of the official organ of the communist party.

THE PROFESSOR : Rather a new stage in the development of the controversy.

SOCRATOV: Therewith it became an issue between an important party authority and the old philosophic leadership in the Communist Academy. The latter of course could not ignore this challenge and issued with a reply signed by Deborin and nine others of his distinguished collaborators, commonly called the "Deborin School." In their statement the authors expressed resentment at the attack of their critics and said that what was correct in the article was not new and had been taken from previous declarations published by the philosophic leadership and that the authors should have acknowledged the source of their ideas. The leaders did not deny that there were shortcomings in their work. Particularly, they felt it a great error that they had not grasped the Trotskyist heresy in time and exposed it. They also realized that they were not able to give proper guidance to the socialist construction plans, but on the whole they had been faithful in carrying out the philosophic will of Lenin, in which the development of the theory of materialist dialectics was the most important problem. It is, to use their expression, the knot which ties together theory and practice in the struggle of the proletariat in our epoch. Their work, they insist, was in complete conformity with Lenin's wishes and therefore the "new turn in philosophy" should be on the basis of this previous accomplishment and that they intended to continue along these lines. "*The turn in the work means therefore a new stage in the further development of materialist dialectics and not a departure from the problem advanced by Lenin.*"

THE REFORMIST: I suppose this reply did not end the controversy. What was the next move?

SOCRATOV: The opposition issued a resolution adopted by the bureau of the party cell at the institute of Red Professors, published in *Pravda* (August 2nd, 1930). This resolution gives a detailed survey of the work accomplished in the field of communist philosophy during recent years and again emphasizes the backwardness of philosophy in face of the actual problems of socialist construction and of the struggle against dangerous heresies, particularly that of the Trotsky-Zinoviev

Opposition, with its eclectic philosophy of action. " Before communist philosophy," reads the statement, " there lies an exceedingly great and actual problem of expanding and widely popularizing the philosophic legacy of Lenin, which represents a most important epoch in the development of Marxian philosophy. For the development of the theory of materialist dialectics it is necessary to make the maximum use of the materials gathered by the natural sciences, as well as the enormous material represented by the experience of the international proletarian movement and by the socialist revolution and socialist construction work in our country." The resolution further points to the work of Lenin and of Marx as great examples of the use of the dialectic method and urges thinkers not to ignore the anti-mechanist contributions of modern bourgeois science which can be utilized by dialectics. It emphasizes the fact that the enormous problems before communist philosophers can be accomplished only by collective effort and the strengthening of the ranks by new loyal collaborators. Finally the resolution urges that the proposed 1930 philosophic conference should take up these urgent problems for definite settlement.

THE HUMANIST : Did this conference take place and was it able to settle these problems ?,

SOCRATOV : The matter was not quite so simple. We must remember that the old leadership could not understand the seriousness of the situation. They interpreted the offensive taken by the Red Professors organization as the impatience of the younger generation of philosophers in revolt against their old leadership, and they attributed this to theoretic immaturity and even to personal animosity on the part of some of their critics. It was decided, however, that the conference should meet on October 18th, both sides getting ready for the fray. The opposition, centreing in the Institute of Red Professors of philosophy and natural science, adopted in its party organization another resolution entitled : " On the Problem of the Situation on the Philosophic Front," which may be considered an indictment of the old philosophic leadership.

THE REFORMIST : Did this resolution contain any new elements not included in the previous statements of the opposition ?
SOCRATOV : I think that the chief merit of this resolution was shown in the ability of its authors to focus their analysis on the present state of development of our revolution. It characterizes the present period as a broad offensive of socialism against the capitalist elements in the country with the resulting intensification of the class struggle. It looks forward to a complete victory over the enemies of socialism, particularly the " kulak " who was resisting the collectivisation of the peasant population to co-operate in agriculture. The elimination of the kulak as a class means the triumph of socialism over the remnants of the capitalist order in the village. " This," says the resolution, " solves the greatest problem of all human history, foretold by the teachers of the working class, Marx and Engels, in *The Communist Manifesto*, the abolition of every division of mankind into classes and the annihilation of every exploitation of one man by another. It sees the intensification of the class struggle reflected also in the field of ideas, expressing itself in the appearance of anti-Marxian trends in philosophic thought, and while recognizing some positive achievements in the work of the old leadership in philosophy it points out some serious defects in its work.
THE HUMANIST : What strikes me in all these controversies is that your revolutionary psychology shows so little consideration for persons who, even though they have made errors, have nevertheless served your cause loyally.
THE ROTARIAN : Think how they fired Trotsky.
THE BANKER : That is what we have against you. You criticize us capitalists for being hard upon our employees, but I don't see that you are any better than we.
THE PROFESSOR : You seem to forget, gentlemen, that this country not only *had* a revolution, but still *is* in one of its most critical stages. It is now laying the foundation of its new social order, " to liquidate the kulak as a class," including millions of individuals, is undoubtedly a cruel thing, but it is the cost of progress. While communists give no quarter to

their class enemies, neither do they give quarter to those of their own group who consciously or unconsciously play into the hands of their class enemies. Go on, Socratov, let's hear this story to the end.

SOCRATOV : The brief against the old leadership contained three principal points. First, their greatest fault is an insufficient appreciation of Lenin as an important factor in the development of dialectical materialism and the inability to grasp that Lenin's philosophy is a new and higher stage in this development. This failure to realize the importance of Lenin as a philosopher shows itself particularly in comparing him with Plekhanov. The old leader, Deborin, and his school have so far given preference to Plekhanov as to defend him against Lenin's criticisms. Secondly, the old leadership, while successfully popularizing Hegel, made the error of considering materialistic dialectics as altogether the *same* as idealistic dialectics. At the same time they taught that Hegel had exhausted the analysis of phenomena and of the forms of movement, which from the point of view of dialectical materialism is not the case. Besides this, Deborin and his group considered that the new interpretation of dialectics was to begin with them, ignoring the work accomplished in this direction by Marx, Engels and Lenin. Thirdly, they made the charge that in interpreting dialectical materialism, Deborin and his group were drifting into Kantian formalism, by depriving its categories of vital historic and concrete content. As a consequence of this, philosophy in the U.S.S.R. had failed to grasp the dialectics of the present class struggle of socialist construction. Finally, they reiterate the charges of flirtation with Trotskyism.

THE REFORMIST : I don't know enough of the case to judge how well founded these charges were, but granted that they were correct, did the opposition have anything constructive to offer instead ?

SOCRATOV : Their resolution contains twelve recommendations which in their opinion sum up the problems now facing communist philosophy. Briefly stated, these are :

(1) Intensified study, interpretation and propaganda of the

philosophic legacy of Lenin and the Marxian classics. To be analyzed and checked by the wealth of material found in the new developments in capitalism and the socialist construction in the U.S.S.R.

(2) Interpretation of the theory of materialistic dialectics as a weapon to change and understand the " old world." It should be turned (to use Lenin's phrase) into a " philosophic science " applied to natural science, technique and the daily practise of socialist construction and the class struggle.

(3) The problem of Lenin versus Plekhanov as Marxian philosophers.

(4) Analysis of the achievements of contemporary natural science and their penetration by dialectic materialism.

(5) Relentless struggle with philosophic idealism, the eternal enemy of Marxism.

(6) Aiding fraternal communist parties in their theoretic work, particularly in their struggle with the revisionist tendencies in social democracy.

(7) Persistence in the struggle with the mechanist heresy as well as with the methodology of the right opportunist trend in the communist party.

(8) Development of the problems of historic materialism growing out of the conditions of the dictatorship of the proletariat, such as the problems of classes, production forces, production relations, etc.

(9) Philosophic defence of the general policy of the party, particularly in its struggle with opportunist tendencies.

(10) Selection and training of a future leadership in philosophy.

(11) Improvement in the problem of popularization and propagation of the Marxo-Leninist philosophy by means of appropriate programme of study and suitable literature.

(12) Extensive self-criticism in philosophy with a conscious party bias creating conditions where real ability can show itself.

Finally the resolution appealed to all to terminate the discussion forthwith and direct all their energies to real constructive work.

THE PROFESSOR: This is quite an inclusive programme and it shows us exactly the present range of philosophic thought among the leading Soviet philosophers.

THE HUMANIST: What strikes me in this programme is the absence of the ethical problem. One wonders whether it exists at all in the minds of communist philosophers. If the world needs anything it needs stimulation of its ethical consciousness, but this seems to be no problem in this country.

THE REFORMIST: The reason for this is quite clear to me. Marxian thought never set ethics apart as something independent of the social process. Ethics is a part of the Marxian conception of the class struggle. Kautsky has ably traced its development and relates it to the social instincts of gregarious animals. I think there is much more to be said about it, but I don't know what the position of communists is on this problem. Perhaps we shall be able to take it up as a special topic of discussion.

SOCRATOV: Ethics is included in point 8 of our programme, which covers the problems of historic materialism. It is inseparable from the problem of classes and the development of culture. Returning to our discussion of the new turn on the philosophic front—its next stage was the decisive battle which was fought on October 18th to 20th, 1930, and which ended with the complete triumph of the opposition. It was opened by a report made by V. P. Milutin, chairman of the presidium of the Communist Academy. He insisted that the work of socialist construction had brought the country close to the forms of socialism and that the disappearance of the kulak class was opening an era of profound change in the ideology of the masses and in cultural life. Thus the problem of the place of theory in practice is brought to the forefront and must be considered the *central* problem. The report criticized the tendency of the old philosophic leadership to adhere to a " pure " formalist philosophy, ignoring the vital problems of the day, and in general, reiterated the charges of the Red Professors which we have just outlined.

THE REFORMIST: This looks as if the Deborin group was

isolated from the outset, if it could not find support from the chairman of the institution in which they worked.

SOCRATOV: Nevertheless, Deborin made a desperate effort to swing the conference in his favour. He denied the charges against his group. He pointed to the achievements of the department in the past under his leadership, particularly in the exposure and defeat of the mechanist heresy, facts which the opposition had recognized in its various resolutions. At the same time he conceded that errors had been made, nor did he deny his personal shortcomings, especially in respect of the Trotsky heresy and other deviations from communist orthodoxy. Nevertheless, he contended, the work of his department was fundamentally sound and it was he who first advanced the slogan for a " turn on the philosophic front," to meet many of the pressing practical problems. The chief task of the change he considered to be the discovery of the laws of the transitional period. Deborin's eloquent defence as well as the able speeches made by representatives of his group, especially by Karev and Sten, failed to convince the opposition.

THE PROFESSOR: Did the opposition bring out any new ideas besides those formulated in their resolutions ?

SOCRATOV: The philosopher Mitin proved himself particularly able as a critic and gained recognition as leader of the opposition. He elucidated the charges which the resolution of the Red Professors contained and insisted that the formalist attitude of Deborin's philosophy was a serious danger in the work of communist philosophy. When interrogated by Deborin as to what he meant by formalism, he said :

> " The essence of formalism consists in an empty scholastic theorizing over the categories of dialectics. In formalism dialectics is transformed from a vital method of cognizance into a co-ordination of *abstract formulas* which outwardly are applied to or fitted to the contents. Formalism consists in the break which occurs in theoretic work between the form and its contents where the logical is separated from the historical, where philosophic theory

is transformed into a sequence of ideas altogether separated from the complete, historical, social class situation."

THE PROFESSOR: Evidently Deborin was unable to conquer the greatest difficulty which every philosopher faces, the problem of relating theory to practice, the problem of unity between the logical and the historical. If our professors had to pass a test on this question, or leave their jobs, very few would remain in their chairs. As I understand the situation, this controversy with the Deborin school is a universal problem, of which, however, we in the West are not so fully conscious.

SOCRATOV: As the discussion went on it became more and more evident that the Deborin group never overcame the weakness of Plekhanov's philosophy, the development of which they continued. Plekhanov accepted Hegel without revaluating him materialistically. Of course he called himself a dialectical materialist, but he never attained to a real synthesis between dialectics and materialism. He kept his dialectics, so to speak, in one pocket and his materialism in another. Lenin was the first to discover this basic defect in the philosophy of his teacher. He criticized him for it and pointed out that a real synthesis between dialectics and materialism may be accomplished in the development of the law of the unity of opposites which is the general law of the material world and of knowledge. Plekhanov, on the contrary, understood the law of the unity of opposites to mean only a sum total of separate instances; rather a mechanical interpretation. The Deborin school did not recognize that Lenin had discovered an independent theoretic basis and instead of following and developing Lenin's ideas as a new stage in dialectics, they continued in the Plekhanov tradition. According to Lenin, dialectics is a theory of knowledge, that is, the categories of knowledge are themselves subject to the process of dialectical movement. According to Deborin, the categories of knowledge are fixed and unchangeable, they have always existed in human consciousness, they are eternal. In short, we recognize here in Deborin an idealistic concept, and this gave rise to the epithet, "Deborin's Menshevik idealism."

THE HUMANIST : I can see the idealism all right, but why Menshevik ?

SOCRATOV : We call it Menshevik, because of its historical association with Plekhanov, whose philosophy is the philosophy of the Mensheviks. Also because Deborin had been an outstanding Menshevik, and only joined the Bolshevik party after the revolution.

THE REFORMIST : Well ! that's interesting ! How could that happen ?

SOCRATOV : Lenin knew Deborin and appreciated his scholarship in spite of the fact that they repeatedly crossed swords on philosophic issues during the great controversies with the empirio-critics. When the Sverdlov Communist University was organized, Lenin approved his candidacy as a professor and also gave Deborin an opportunity to enter the communist party. Apparently, Deborin never freed himself altogether from his Menshevik traditions, and his thinking, in spite of its outward revolutionary form, retained this quality of Menshevik idealism.

THE REFORMIST : It seems then that the mechanists were right when they charged the Deborin school with Hegelian idealism. And yet you excommunicated the mechanists.

SOCRATOV : While the mechanists correctly sensed Deborin's idealism, their alternative was not dialectical materialism, but mechanistic materialism. This created the problem of the struggle on two fronts, against the idealist and against the mechanist heresies, which though extreme opposites, have this in common, that their categories of thought are static. Our problem is to overcome these trends with their inevitable eclectic features. This can be done only by a truly synthetic dialectic materialism, at the heart of which is the law of the unity of opposites, so emphatically emphasized by Lenin. This law solves the problem of theory versus practise. Theory not checked by practice becomes a dogma, a scholastic formula, and any claim that a theory does not need such checking is already an idealistic heresy. Dialectical materialism is a unity of theory and practice. Practice is guided by theory ;

theory is checked by practice. In the unity of opposites there is always one leading and dominating element, hence opposites in unity differ qualitatively and in essence. They are not of like value in respect to the progressive movement of the whole. They pass one into the other under objective concrete conditions, they appear to be the same, yet not altogether and not in every respect. In this aspect Lenin's dialectics differed from Hegel's who looked forward to an absolute unity of opposites. Lenin maintains that in socialist society there will be no antagonism, but the immanent contradictions will remain. They are the necessary presuppositions of further development, otherwise socialism would be static, but now it is an endless change of qualitative forms in a classless society.

THE PROFESSOR : What you said just now is exceedingly important. It removes some of the difficulties which I had in mind when I asked the question : " What will happen after a classless society has been attained ? "

THE ROTARIAN : This is getting a little too philosophical. I am getting mixed up by all these subtleties of united opposites. What I want to know is : What did they do with this man, Deborin ?

SOCRATOV : Deborin realized his defeat and at the close of the discussion he changed his attitude towards the majority opinion and publicly confessed his former Menshevik errors. He also conceded that he and his group had taken a wrong attitude toward the party and he requested that his defence be considered null and void. Thus he put himself at the mercy of the victorious majority, though this did not save him from being removed as a leader in the department of philosophy of the Communist Academy. Milutin, in summing up the debates about the differences on the philosophic front, correctly observed : " The whole problem is included in the fact that at present we have closely approached socialism. This means that new laws begin to function in our social development and these also must be grasped theoretically and correspondingly developed."

THE PROFESSOR : We can hardly realize that it has actually

happened and that the U.S.S.R. *has* entered upon the era of socialism. We congratulate you as the first-born of socialist countries and we wish you success in laying a firm foundation for your new social order. What mighty implications the successful industrial and agrarian revolution holds for the cultural and social life not only of the many nations in the Soviet Union, but also for the whole world ! It challenges the imagination, even of the most daring minds, and few of us are able to grasp its full scope. What then if some individuals fall by the way ? Under ordinary conditions, in a settled, mature civilization with no severe problems pressing upon society, philosophers may with impunity pursue their scholarly interests. But in a revolutionary epoch, when the foundations of a new social order are being laid which will affect the welfare of generations, society and a responsible revolutionary party has the right and the duty to ask of its philosophic leadership theoretic guidance in the upbuilding of the new life and order.

SOCRATOV : Look at this inscription, carved in stone over the portals of the building opposite this hotel. It reads : *The revolution is a cyclone which sweeps away everything in its path.* This has happened to many of our former leaders, to groups and even to whole revolutionary parties like those of the Mensheviks and social revolutionaries who obstructed the victorious sweep of the proletarian revolution in Russia. It should therefore cause no surprise that this calamity has also overtaken the old philosophic leadership when it lost its vigilance and failed to read the seismographic warnings in the quakings of the revolution. This is by no means an easy task. There are few geniuses recorded in history who could grasp and analyze in detail the epoch of which they themselves were a part, and point the way to further progress. Marx and Engels, trained in the great classic schools of philosophy and equipped with the skilful tool of Hegelian dialectics, were able to lift themselves above the shallow waters of ordinary school philosophy and become the leaders of a new school of thought. Lenin may equally be considered such a genius. He also was able to grasp the laws of the revolutionary forces of his epoch,

and more than this he showed himself capable not only of understanding what was going on, but of applying his understanding to the greatest revolution in history and leading it to victory. The new turn which communist philosophy has made shows that its revolutionary dynamic is not exhausted and that our movement in spite of tremendous obstacles is persistently striving towards its daring goal.

THE SENATOR: I have been almost silent during these discussions. They have been too specialized and far beyond my limited knowledge of philosophy. But I have not missed a single discussion and now I must say that while I am not convinced that your philosophy has a universal meaning, it may be all right to direct your revolution.

THE HUMANIST: Don't think, Senator, that we shall let you go at that. We have still a few days before we leave the city and we want to get at some of the concrete problems of applied dialectics which the " new turn in philosophy " promised to solve.

THE LEADER: We have an engagement to visit the Anti-religious Museum to-day. It may be a good introduction to the study of the philosophic aspects of concrete problems. I suggest that we adjourn for the present.

DIALOGUE XVI

In which the Religious Problem under Communism is dealt with.

(*A bishop of the Church of England was present at this discussion.*)

THE LEADER (*to Socratov*): Yesterday at the Anti-religious Museum we made the acquaintance of this gentleman, who is a bishop of the great Anglican Church. We told him of our interesting conversations with you and he expressed his desire to join our discussion this afternoon. Since to-day we are going to deal with the problem of religion, we thought it very fortunate to have with us such a highly-qualified representative of the Church. We took it for granted that you would not object to his presence.

SOCRATOV: Not at all. I am glad to meet the reverend gentleman. (*He bows.*)

THE BISHOP (*replying to the bow*): I appreciate your hospitality and the freedom you have offered me to see and to learn about what I am particularly interested in and that, of course, is religion. Don't think that because I button my collar behind that I look backward. I have visited your Anti-religious Museum and I begin to understand that your strong antipathies to the Church have a very unfortunate historical background to explain them. It shows clearly how the Church and the throne joined hands in holding down the people. By way of criticism, however, I should say that your museum would gain in value if it did not stress propaganda so much and dealt with the problem of religion more objectively. You should show not only the negative aspects of religion, but also the positive service religion has rendered to humanity.

SOCRATOV : Our museum is an *anti*-religious museum. This justifies its negative stress. Besides, we are rather at a loss to point to anything of a positive character in religion. If you can suggest anything positive I shall be glad to hear it.

THE BISHOP : Well, first of all, the Church has always, even in its darkest days, stood for law and order. It has done so under feudalism, under monarchy and empire, under republicanism and democracy and I see no reason why it could not render service also to a Soviet State if toleration and protection were granted to it. The Church has always stood on the principle expressed by St. Paul : " For there is no power, but of God ; and the powers that be are ordained of God."

SOCRATOV : To us that means, in the language of Marxism, that the Church has always been an implement of exploitation in the hands of the ruling class, giving supernatural sanction to every existing despotism. As to the desire of the Church to come to terms with us, to be frank, we refused the willing service which the bishops and clergy of the religious in our country had graciously offered us. They wanted, of course, in return certain concessions to help them back to the power which they lost in the revolution. We can manage our affairs quite well without them, we don't need the Church because the masses are with us and we hold our power not by fraud. Let the Church take care of itself, if it has any power within it to survive. Meanwhile, we shall mercilessly expose its frauds ; we shall demonstrate to the world that our social order has no place for religion, except as a museum relic and a warning for the generations to come.

THE HUMANIST : I am not one of those who hold a brief for ecclesiasticism of any kind. I am glad you smashed the damned institution, which was a disgrace and a discredit to true religion. But you cannot sweep away that superb culture which has been inspired by religious emotion. That would be barbarism of the worst kind. Leave out of your art museums the treasusre which have a religious meaning and which were idealistically motivated and what would be left ? Forget the works of Bach, Handel, Beethoven, Mussorgsky and the others

who confessed that music to them was a mystic inspiration and what remains to remind you of the mysterious persuasions of musical harmonies ? Throw out of your literature a Gogol, a Tolstoy, and a Dostoievsky—all of them openly religious—and what is left would tell a sorry tale of Russia's literary creation. And is this not true of every other aspect of your culture and of the culture of the world ? You make things too simple. You are in danger of losing your sense of values and of cutting yourself off from the very roots out of which you have grown.

SOCRATOV : You forget, gentlemen, that we are in revolution, that the passions of struggle have not subsided and therefore the language of our agitators may seem to you to depreciate past cultures. This, however, is not our meaning. We know the value of past cultures and we have done more to preserve these than the old regimé ever did. This does not mean, however, that we should imitate the art of a bygone age. We know the value of a Bach, a Beethoven and a Mussorgsky. We learn from them, but we do not imitate them. We do not look upon religion as a fraud, as the French materialists did. We approach it historically and dialectically, and this very approach shows us that in a communist social order there will be no place for it.

THE PROFESSOR : Don't let your emotions get the better of you. This is a serious problem and we ought to approach it as objectively as the case deserves. I suggest that Comrade Socratov should define for us what he means by religion, for misunderstandings are inevitable, if we don't agree on our terminology and define our premises clearly.

SOCRATOV : I repeat, our approach to the problem which is generally termed religious is a historical approach. Our main premise is that social being determines consciousness and therefore religion is not a mere device of shrewd minds who want to use it for selfish purposes. When Holbach, the great French anti-religious philosopher, said that " eternal life was thought out to prove the justice of God and free him from responsibility for the suffering which even his favoured ones

endure on the earth," he was not reasoning historically. Religious beliefs have not been " thought out " by anybody in particular, they have grown out of conditions of life in which fear, ignorance, suffering, curiosity, and the desire to find a rational justification for life itself have all made their contributions. We maintain, therefore, that *religions are ideologies*, they are the theories by which people live—but in a class society these ideologies always favour the governing class and are used to hold down the masses.

THE REFORMIST : There can be really no objection to this definition of religion. It is quite modern and shared by most sociologists. For this very reason, I do not quite understand why you should be so excited about it and not let it remain a matter of conscience, as we Western socialists do. We say, " if any member of the party has need of the comforts of religion, let him have them. If religion has lost its meaning and authority as it has to most of us, it will die a natural death without any particular effort on our part. If it still survives, that only shows that there are some people who are not ready for atheism. To my mind, atheism is as dogmatic as theism. A truly scientific mind must naturally be an agnostic mind.

THE BISHOP : Permit me, gentlemen, to disagree with you. Atheism has been tried before. Think of the French revolution ! It failed not because the science of its day did not give it full support, but because its premises were wrong. You think that man is predominantly a rational being. He is not. Very few people act on rational grounds. They are driven by desire, emotion, blind will, or whatever you like to call it. Religion alone has so far been able to appreciate these characteristics of human nature. The sacraments and mysteries of the Church, therefore, have always been highly appreciated, even by very intelligent people. When I visited your churches, I was profoundly impressed by the mystic aestheticism which the Church has preserved and still presents to the people. It has a quality which cannot be so easily dispensed with. There may be a temporary drifting away from it, but unless you find some adequate substitute to meet these emotional demands,

sooner or later the people will swing back to religion. Only rationalistic religion is condemned to die, never mystic religion.

THE PROFESSOR: You mean to say that religion is an indispensible "opium of the people" as Marx characteristically called it?

THE BISHOP: Call it opium if you care, I stand firm on my thesis. Show me any other means which will render the same comfort to a bereaved person as religion. So long as there is sin, sorrow and death there will be need for religion. My many years' experience as a clergyman have never let me doubt this truth. Besides, modern science is fast coming our way. World-renowned physicists and biologists are abandoning their materialistic positions. Who does not know the names of Einstein, of Sir J. A. Thomson, of Julian Huxley, Sir Arthur Eddington, Millikan and Sir James Jeans. The latter, a famous astronomer, comes to the conclusion that, "the universe shows evidence of a designing or controlling power that has something in common with our own individual minds." Similarly, Eddington writes: "The spiritual element in our experience is the creative element, and if we remove it as we have tried to do in physics on the ground that it also creates illusions, we must ultimately reach the nothingness which was in the beginning. We have within us some power of self-criticism, to test the validity of our own convictions . . . I think this power can be nothing less than a ray proceeding from the light of absolute truth, a thought proceeding from the absolute mind."

THE BANKER: What do you have to say now? Not a leg for you to stand on! You think we are know-nothings. I am glad we met the bishop. You can't fool him so easily on these questions.

SOCRATOV: We are quite aware of the fact that the old mechanistic position of natural science is no longer tenable and that as a result of this many distinguished bourgeois scientists have swung to mysticism. This situation is of course exploited by the Church, which is always ready to pick up the crumbs from the table of the scientists. Theology has long since lost

its boasted place as the queen of sciences. It can no longer stand on its own legs. The pity is, however, that such able scientists as those you mentioned, whose work we by no means disregard, should at the same time be so backward philosophically as not to see the implications of their own discoveries. Modern science, which seeks to establish an objective reality, finds that the theory of relativity has given the subjective element its place in our grasp of the physical universe. In the other great modern development of physics, the quantum theory, there is distinctly demonstrated continuity and break, the latter grasped as a subjective element. Our philosophy of dialectical materialism pre-supposes these phenomena. We say, therefore, that modern science corroborates the dialectical hypothesis of continuity and break, of the unity (not the sameness) of the subjective and the objective. Eddington, however, feels that the quantum theory involves abandoning the hope of finding objective truth. He contents himself with analyzing the physical universe into ultimate subjective elements. Thus what appears as a mystery to Eddington is to us a firm basis for the further development of the dialectical philosophy.

THE HUMANIST: I am glad you are giving a place to the subjective element in knowledge and social experience. This very fact to my mind justifies religion. If I ask myself: "What is religion to me?" I answer: "It is my relation to the whole of this universe. It is my effort to locate myself in the universe, very much as the captain, tossed about on the sea, locates himself on the ocean with the help of the guiding stars above him. I believe in man. The anchor of my faith is human nature. I see it rising from its humble ancestry of plants and animals, yet ever aspiring, driven by an inner urge to know and to do the truth. I repeat with the poet Clough:

> "It fortifies my soul to know,
> That though I perish, Truth is so."

This is a conviction which Socrates shared when he said: "One thing and one alone ought a man to consider and that is

whether he does what is right or wrong." As I believe that man is moral, so I believe that the universe is moral. There is a quality or a principle of life that is working ever for the attainment of all that is true, beautiful and good.

SOCRATOV: I am beginning to realize that I have landed in religious company, although each of you seems to have a special approach to the problem. To us it is a curiosity to see how tenaciously the Anglo-Saxon holds on to religion. He hardly asks whether his religion is consistent with his behaviour in the economic and political field. Almost any religiously-coated absurdity he readily swallows.

THE PROFESSOR: Your observation is quite correct, and therefore, as a Marxist, you ought to realize that even the preaching of communist doctrine should be suited to these traditions of the Anglo-Saxon mind, to its prejudices, if you like. You often forget this, and as a result the communist doctrine, though very timely for the proletariat of England and America, is frequently rejected because of its frank atheism. Before coming here I visited the coal miners in West Virginia and Kentucky where an intense class struggle is raging between the old stock of American proletarians, both coloured and white, and their bosses, the American coal operators. The miners open their union meetings with prayer; they have their preachers who themselves are miners and strikers; they preach a queer but definitely revolutionary doctrine based on Bible texts, indiscriminately justifying acts of violence, including the killing of their class enemies. Yet these people are against any agitator who comes to them with a doctrine of frank atheism. The same situation I found in England. This may be one of the reasons why communism is not making better headway among these intellectually backward peoples. I may add that this is the case even with our intellectuals. They either hold to a quasi-religious ideology or to a cowardly agnosticism. This ought to be kept in mind by the communist agitator.

THE REFORMIST: Agnosticism is not cowardly. It is only intellectual honesty. We refuse to be compelled to accept the atheistic hypothesis as a proven fact. It is not warranted

by the evidence, and therefore it is premature. I fully agree with the Professor that the socialist message can be presented in a language which would be more acceptable and intelligible to our people, who still cling to their religious traditions. Take for example Joseph Dietzgen, the first proletarian philosopher, a contemporary of Marx and recognized by him as an original thinker, who quite independently came to many of the same conclusions as Marx. He knew how to approach the masses. He published sermons on socialism, calling them "The Religion of Social Democracy." Many of his sayings are still timely.

THE ROTARIAN: Where did Dietzgen live? Was he an American?

THE REFORMIST: He was a German, a tanner by profession. For some time he lived in Russia, but later emigrated to America where he became, in the last decades of the past century, the editor of a German socialist paper in Chicago. He was active in defending the anarchists charged with inciting the Haymarket riots. The sermons I refer to were written in the seventies of last century. They are preserved in Volume I of his collected works. If you are interested, I can quote you some interesting passages, as I have the volume in my room.

THE SENATOR: Let's hear it. (*The Reformist leaves the room.*) I wonder what a man who was giving his support to those anarchist assassins who were condemned to death by our law, could have to say about religion?

SOCRATOV: We know Joseph Dietzgen and consider him one of the classics of Marxism. At present our Communist Academy is preparing a Russian translation of his collected works.

Re-enter the Reformist.

THE REFORMIST: Generally I may say that Dietzgen tries to show that religion is a historically necessary reflex of thought, which springs from the human need for a material and spiritual satisfaction and from a striving for the happiness of any society in the world. In characterizing the relation of social democracy to religion, he says:

> " The tendencies of social democracy contain the substance of a new religion, which unlike all others heretofore, does not rest on the emotions of the heart, but equally in the head as the implement of science. . . . ' God '—that is the good, the beautiful, the holy—must become man, must descend from heaven to earth, not, however, as once before in a religious, miraculous manner, but in a natural, earthly way. We ask for a saviour ; we ask that our gospel, the word of God, become flesh ; not, however, in an individual, not in a definite person, should it be incarnated, but all of us want, the people want to be the Son of God. . . . Religion was until now a matter of the proletariat. Now, on the contrary, the cause of the proletariat begins to become religious. . . . All (religions) strive to redeem suffering humanity from its earthly woes and to lead it on to the good, the beautiful, the just, the divine. Yes, social democracy is in so far the true religion, the only saving church, since it does not try to attain the common goal in a fantastic manner, not through begging, wishing or sighing, but in a real, active way, which is genuine and true, through social organization of the work of hand and brain."

THE HUMANIST : Good humanist doctrine ! It sounds rather modern.

THE PROFESSOR : One feels that Dietzgen imbibed the teaching of Feuerbach.

THE REFORMIST : He went much further than Feuerbach. Listen to this :

> " The modern saviour is called *work* . . . our hopes of redemption are not directed towards a religious ideal, but are constructed upon a massive material foundation. From praying and suffering we pass on to thinking and creating. . . . Culture, until now, was the goal and man the means. Now we have to reverse this : man is the goal and culture the means. . . . *Conscious planned organization of socialized work is the hoped-for saviour of modern times.* Science and work are like God the Father

> and God the Son, two things and yet one substance. I would call . . . this truth the cardinal dogma of the social democratic church, if the social democracy could be called a church and rational knowledge a dogma."

SOCRATOV: Historically, I agree, there may be some justification for using the language of religious ideology to introduce socialist doctrine. Such efforts were also made by some of our writers. A. Lunarcharsky wrote a large volume on *Religion and Socialism*, in which he considers feeling to be the source of religion. "Religion," he says, "is such thinking about the world and such sensing of the world as psychologically solves the contrast between the laws of life and the laws of nature." Maxim Gorki, too, wrote on "God-Building," in which he advocated the necessity for each generation to construct its own ideas of God. There were other outstanding Bolshevists who under the pressure of the reaction which followed the 1905 revolution drifted into mysticism of one sort or another. Lenin definitely opposed these deviations from the Marxian point of view. He wrote to Gorki:

> "The idea of God always benumbed and dulled the 'social sense' by substituting the dead for the living, being *always* an idea of servitude (of the worst, inescapable servitude). Never did the idea of God relate the individual to society. It always related the oppressed classes to the faith in the divinity of their oppressors. . . . There was a time in history when in spite of this origin and this actual significance of the idea of God, the struggle of democracy and the proletariat went on in the form of a struggle of one religious idea against another. . . . These times have long since passed. At present, in Europe and in Russia, every apology or justification of the idea of God, even the most subtle, the most well intended is a justification of reaction."

You see that this problem is not new to us.

THE PROFESSOR: If Lenin had known conditions in America and in England as intimately as he did those in Russia and Western Europe, I am sure he would have appreciated our

difficulties on this problem. Besides, if I am not mistaken, Lenin himself approached the Russian sectarians at the time when these groups were being persecuted by the Tsarist régime, trying to enlist their religious zeal in a revolutionary struggle against Tsarism. However, that is a matter of the past and we are chiefly interested in what is the present attitude of communist thought on the question of religion.

SOCRATOV: To say that we have arrived at a definite theory of religion would, perhaps, be premature. We are only now beginning to undertake serious research on the subject. There are different hypotheses among our scholars, although all accept Marx as a starting point for their research. For example, N. N. Pokrovsky, one of our distinguished historians, has advanced the hypothesis that fear of death is the creator of religion. This fear he holds is characteristic not only of men, but of the whole organic world as well. To illustrate his point he quotes from Pushkin's description of the scene in *Eugene Onegin*, in which the dead body of Lensky, just killed in a duel, is placed in a sleigh. Pushkin notes the reaction of the horses.

> "Sensing the dead, they snort,
> The horses prance, white with foam,
> They wet their bridles of steel,
> Speed forward like an arrow."

We do not accept this hypothesis, for it suggests that religion begins in animal life and is of biological origin.

THE HUMANIST: Biological hypotheses about religion are quite popular at present. Take for example Freud. He finds the origins of religion in the instincts of reproduction and the associated impulses of destruction and violence. Religion is a controlling force which bridles these destructive passions and sublimates them. Like other aspects of culture it is an instrument for the suppression of the animal instincts.

SOCRATOV: We reject these biological theories, though on the surface they seem materialistic. Essentially they are idealistic, since they trace religion not to the psychology of society, but to the psychology of individuals and their biological peculi-

arities. In the final analysis, this leads to the view that religion is inherent in nature and to the acceptance of spiritual principles existing independently of the social environment. In short you may call such a view a proof of the existence of God. If we turn to Marx and Engels we find that to them religion was first and foremost a social product. In their *German Ideology* they write :

> " We shall proceed from real active people, and we shall try to deduce from their life process the development of ideological reflexes of this life process also. The vague images in the brains of men are also necessary sublimations of their material life process, empirically established and related to material conditions. In this manner, morals, religion, metaphysics and other types of ideology, together with their corresponding forms of consciousness lose their apparent independence. They do not have a history at all, they have no development, there are only people developing their material production and their material relations change also by their activity, their thinking and the products of their thinking."

Here the founders of Marxism clearly indicate the interdependence of all aspects of the life process. Ideology is not something by itself, it is a part of the social-economic process. Hence religion must be studied upon this background. Like every other aspect of ideology it has been used in the interest of the governing and exploiting class. Religion obscures the true earthly relations of men. It presents them in a perverted manner. It gives supernatural sanction to every form of exploitation and violence. It certifies existing institutions as parts of an eternal, divine order. War, slavery, the factory system employing little children, poverty, even disease have all been justified and sanctioned by religion. Lenin was perfectly right when he concluded that " all contemporary religions and churches, all and every kind of religious organization, Marxism has always viewed as organs of bourgeois reaction, serving as a defence of exploitation and doping the working class."

THE BISHOP : These conclusions are too sweeping. The fact that attempts were always made to justify every anti-social act by religion is to my mind the best testimony to the power of religion. It gives force and validity to all action both good and evil, therefore you ought also to have mentioned those good social deeds and that service to mankind which when religiously inspired was so much more effective. The hygienic taboos for example, which we find in the early Jewish Church, would never have had such a powerful effect had they been presented to the people in the manner of a doctor advising his patients to-day. The advice of the doctor as a rule is quickly forgotten if there is no pain to remind the patient that he has transgressed the laws of nature. But the Old Testament's " thus saith the Lord," was so much more authoritative than any such scientifically established advice. There are tremendous things, both terrible and lovely, which the Church has to its credit. In the barbarous ages of Europe it was a welding force of unity ; it inspired crusades and compelled unruly princes to make peace ; it produced a Torquemada, but also a St. Francis ; a Thomas Aquinas and Thomas a'Kempis ; a Livingstone and a Florence Nightingale ; it built cathedrals and prisons ; it obstructed science and created immortal arts ; it was conservative, at times reactionary, but then again prophetic. In short, religion has been a power inspiring men to do all things with greater zeal and endurance. You think religion is dying, that it has no place any more in what you call a classless society. You insist that it is to-day only a force of reaction, an implement of exploitation in the hands of the governing classes, a vehicle of imperialism ; but you forget Indian nationalism, that most astounding social-religious phenomenon which at present is making the British Empire tremble. Who can deny that it is the saintliness of the lowly Gandhi that holds the Indian people together like an electric magnet. I can assure you that the British government would prefer to face thousands of armed insurgents than half as many unarmed, hymn-singing and praying Gandhists.

SOCRATOV : If religion were not a force, we would hardly take

the pains to talk about it or establish scientific institutes for its special study and special organizations to combat its influence. When we weigh religion in the balance of history we come to the conclusion that its force for evil has been much greater than its force for good. Voltaire estimated that up to his time religious wars had consumed a good share of humanity, amounting to some ten millions. And since his days we have had many more wars, each of them blessed by the Churches of all the contending nations, who all fought under some such slogan as " Gott mit Uns." You mentioned Gandhi as an example of a religious force in the modern world. With all due respect to the Mahatma we have our doubts whether he can avoid bloodshed. The drama of the Indian nationalist independence movement, with which we fully sympathize, is still in its initial stage ; meanwhile I want to remind you of another heroic drama, the great proletarian revolution, victoriously unfolding itself before your very eyes. It never appealed to the religious, never fought its battles under the guidance of imaginary gods ; it displayed heroism unparalleled in history. Its sacrifice, its endurance continues ; not only in fighting off invading enemies, not only in combatting a reactionary church with all its fictitious gods and mysteries ; but in the creation of a new civilization and culture which is rapidly overtaking and surpassing everything known in the world heretofore. Is this not the best proof that you can do things without the stimulus of religion ? Our enemies on the other hand carried crosses and ikons against us into battle. They thought they could frighten us with holy water and the anathema of the Church ; yet we stood and shall stand against patriarch and pope and all the rest of you who speak in the name of religion and the Church.

THE HUMANIST : To be frank Socratov, I have often thought about this remarkable fact of your revolution. The other day I stood in front of Lenin's tomb. I glanced up to the Kremlin wall ; to the skyline of steeples, domes and crosses. Below the wall were the graves of those who fought and fell to capture this citadel for the proletariat. Next to me stood

the American preacher-poet, John Haynes Holmes, taken up with the same thoughts, and he wrote a hymn in answer to this question of the mysterious urge of mankind to do heroic things. Let me quote a few stanzas :

" When God was God and Tsar was Tsar, and God and Tsar were one ;
Here, in this templ'd citadel, the doom of men was done.
Now Tsars are dead, and God denied, and lo, this mound of stone,
This barricade of liberty for humble men and lone !

" O Thou, whose spirit moves the deep and tells the toll of days,
Thou askest not for name or sign, thou seekest not for praise.
Unrecognized, unseen, unknown, thou waitest patient still,
Content if men unwittingly contrive to do thy will."

Here the poet felt that though unconscious, the revolutionist was doing the will of God. To us who do not cling to an ecclesiastical dogmatic religion, but who analyze the pathos of your revolution, psychologically in the light of our own religious experience, it appears that while you deny the religious character to your revolution it is of the same stuff that prophetic religions were made of. Compare for a minute the zeal of the early Christians with that of your revolutionists and shock workers. You as well as they looked forward to a classless society of equal brotherhood. The Christians called it the Kingdom of God on earth ; you call it the Communist Order of Society. They were inspired to cross mountains and seas to spread their gospel, and to-day your agitators risk persecution, death and jail to carry the message of the world revolution. They thought they had the absolute truth ; you also believe in the infallibility of your philosophy. The Christians looked forward to an Armageddon before their cause could triumph ; you too look forward to a bloody conflict with capitalist imperialism before the proletarian revolution

shall be victorious in the world. The Christians were driven by an inexplicable inner urge which they called " God within us " or the " witness of the Holy Spirit " in the hearts of men. Now I observe the same urge within your people and I ask you, " What is this urge ? Why are there men in your ranks who fought against their own personal and class interests ? " You can't explain it by class utilitarianism alone. Your great leaders and thinkers from Marx and Engels onward were not proletarians. They became such by voluntary, sacrificial disavowal of their own class. This is the great " X," the unknown force which so mysteriously moves the human race and which I call God.

SOCRATOV : We have not stopped to think why we do the things which seem so unusual to you. We have had no time for this. We refuse of course to agree with your terminology, because a word like " god " may become a crevice through which may creep the germ of religious reaction. You know we are not mechanists. Our philosophy, while presupposing continuity, provides an equal place for breaks, for evolution, for creative work. Such is the nature of the universe. Why Marx, Engels, Lenin, Kropotkin and many others became the leaders of revolutionary thought and action against their own class interests, and why others did not, is one of the problems to which both the psychologist and the historian must turn their attention. They certainly were biological variants. Further, their social environment prompted them to take some unusual steps. One thing, however, we do know, and this can be established statistically, that each transitional epoch of history, during which the social organism of interpenetrating opposites is ready to break and produce a new social mutation, in short each revolutionary period, produces its leadership.

THE PROFESSOR : With due appreciation of your realism, we intellectuals nevertheless cannot stop our minds from working. Our thoughts project themselves far beyond immediate needs. I, too, must ask questions belonging to the field of religion. Some of these I have settled to my own satisfaction. For example, I believe there is no need for a conflict of science and

religion. I agree with Sir J. Arthur Thompson that science and religion only speak different languages. To him science " Seeks to answer the question : What is this ? Whence is it ? How does it come to be as it is and how does it continue in being ? And sometimes whither away ? But science as science never asks the question : Why ? That is to say, it never inquires into the meaning or significance or purpose of this manifold being, becoming and having been. Science fishes in the sea of reality with particular kinds of nets called scientific methods and there may be much in the unfathomed sea which the meshes of the scientific net cannot catch."

THE BISHOP : To this admirable definition of the relations of science to religion by Sir J. Arthur Thompson, I should like to add Julian Huxley's statement. " While the practical task of science," he says, " is to provide man with new knowledge and increased powers of control, the practical task of religion is to help man decide how he shall use that knowledge and those powers." Some think that science will dispel all mysteries. While it explains one phenomenon, while it removes many obstacles from the way of our thought, it creates as many new mysteries, far surpassing the old. Hence if we should accept the materialist hypothesis, that science in dissipating the mysterious compasses the death of religion, it still has a long way to travel to the point where there remains nothing mysterious.

THE PROFESSOR : Speaking of mysteries inexplicable to science, the one which has attracted me most is the undeniable fact that there is something which we may distinctly call a religious experience. I know that some people deny it, but their arguments are very much the same as those of a colour-blind man or one who is stone-deaf. I speak not only from observation, but also from the personal experience of my youth. I distinctly trace my devotion to truth, to justice and the good to that religious experience which I lived through some thirty years ago. It is one of those subtle things which, to use Sir Arthur's metaphor, the meshes of the scientific net have not caught in this unfathomed sea of human experience. Psychologists of

religion who have made a special study of these phenomena associate it with the transitional stages of human life. It is usually a product of adolescence, but sometimes of approaching old age. The latter was the case in Tolstoy's religious experience. Is it something pathological? It certainly is not anything which would commonly be called rational. Lombroso considered that every genius is a pathological case, so perhaps the religious genius is, too. I brought up this question with a forward glance to the communist social order. Will the religious experience, I ask, be made impossible in this order? This alone to my mind will answer the question whether there is a future for religion under communism. The answer depends first of all on whether we consider the religious experience exclusively a product of environment (which seems to be the Marxian point of view) or whether religious experience is equally conditioned subjectively, i.e. biologically. I am inclined to accept the latter view; and to think that while religious expression and form is conditioned by the social environment, it is nevertheless in unity with the subjective element. In short it functions dialectically by an interpenetration and a unity of the subjective disposition and the objective environment.

SOCRATOV: While we emphasize the social environment, we cannot of course, as dialecticians, deny all consideration to the subjective elements.

THE PROFESSOR: If we project our thoughts into the future, what do we see happening in this country? First of all we may say that science and technique are triumphantly marching forward. The socialist order has this advantage that it can control the machine and be its master rather than its slave. We may conclude, therefore, that science and the machine will eliminate poverty, ignorance and disease. I see the science of eugenics applied to the improvement of the human race. But I question whether it is possible to find a method by which we may select people free from those emotional peculiarities which make for religion. We may look forward to a classless society, to the disappearance of the State as an

implement for the suppression of individuality, and to the time when wars shall be no more, because in a classless society we shall have removed the causes which breed war. What will this fortunate progeny of the social revolution do ? How will it inspire its life for creative work, when there are no more enemies to conquer ? I believe it will draw inspiration from the sacrifice of the revolutionary generation ; it will build many more shrines in honour of its leaders like the one now dedicated to Lenin. Instead of churches it will build great assembly halls and theatres, which it might properly call " Palaces of Social Emulation." I look forward to the disappearance of all that which the past has known as ecclesiasticism and sacerdotalism. While these institutions will wither away and ideologies will change, one thing I am convinced will remain, i.e. the insatiable *urge* to project oneself into the unknown and come to terms with the universe. Before this eternal urge I reverently bow and I feel that the generations to come will do likewise.

SOCRATOV : There is no end to the process of becoming and the eternal contradictions which move things will remain. How they will express themselves in future generations, I do not try to guess. We communists have our immediate goal ; we must conquer the forces of nature and make them serve our needs ; we must liquidate the class struggle throughout the world by laying our socialist foundations ; we must stamp out ignorance and superstition and help our brother proletarians everywhere to attain these same ends. Then the true, the good and the beautiful will flower and bear abundant fruit. For this we live and struggle and are ready to die.

THE SENATOR : In this discussion you have talked about everything under the sun, but you have failed to mention what seems to me the most important thing in religion. How are you going to keep men straight and decent while your experiments with the future social order are going on ? What is your ethics ? Do you think there is no place for the ten commandments ? I think we should discuss the problem of morality. I hear all this talk about world revolution, but when

I look round this country, I see suppression of the individual and violence everywhere. You too have your gaols and your G.P.U.s. I ask you, " What is your basis of morality ? "

THE HUMANIST : The Senator is right. I suggest that to-morrow we take up the discussion of ethics under communism.

THE ROTARIAN : I greatly enjoyed hearing all this talk about past and future religions, but now let me tell you about the finest religion of the present, the one to which I adhere. It is the religion of human brotherhood. We know no class struggle and recognize no class divisions. The rotarian . . .

THE LEADER : Pardon me for interrupting ! The bishop is leaving for Leningrad. The rotarians will be always with us ! We shall hear of them again.

DIALOGUE XVII

In which the Problem of Ethics under Communism is discussed.

THE SENATOR: I have brought up this matter of ethics in relation to our discussion on religion because it is my conviction that religion exists to make men more decent, to control their passions and set before them ideals which make them fitter members of society. I cannot see how a state can exist which disregards religion and ethics. You criticize the Church and its morals and religious teaching. What have you communists against the ten commandments and what have you to offer in place of them?

THE ROTARIAN: And what's wrong with the golden rule: "whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye also unto them?" Have you anything better than that to offer as a guide for men's behaviour?

SOCRATOV: What is wrong with the Christian Magna Charta of ethics, as the Hebrew Decalogue has been called? The chief wrong that I see lies in the fact that the Church and the State, which have adopted these ancient rules, have never considered the conditions which brought them into existence, and do not think it necessary to create the conditions in society which would allow these norms to be realized. I do not say that we find these norms satisfactory. They contain rules designed for a society with private property and hence they are subject to change with the changing social order. Another fault is that you attach a divine origin to the decalogue, thus giving it eternal value. We consider morality an outgrowth of social relations and not a system of static truth. The Hebrew Yahveh was a jealous and revengeful God "visiting

the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation." We, however, exclude any thought of revenge from our treatment of the criminal. We either try to reform him, if in our opinion reformation is possible, or if we find this impossible, we shoot him as an incurable nuisance to society. We never discriminate against a child, whether it is the child of a prostitute or of any other citizen. Our idea of justice is not the justice of the second commandment with its underlying idea of revenge even to the fourth generation. That is an antiquated, savage conception of tribal justice. Take the commandment about the seventh day as the day of rest. We want as much leisure as possible for our workers, and as our economic conditions improve we shall increase correspondingly the number of rest days. Again the society for which the decalogue was designed had instituted private property, including slaves and servants, as the tenth commandment indicates. We, however, do not sanction private property and least of all " man-servants and maid-servants."

THE ROTARIAN : But what about the golden rule ?

SOCRATOV : As a general precept, there can be no objection to it, provided it does not serve as a fetish of individualism. Society, particularly during revolutionary epochs, must frequently disregard individual interests in its struggle to create conditions which will permit future generations to live a happier life. Much of what we do at present, and all the hardship we put up with can hardly be called enjoyable, yet for the good of the workers of the world we sacrifice our personal interests.

THE PROFESSOR : From your comments on the traditional norms of morality, we realize that your approach to ethics is quite different from the common one. Give us your opinion on the origins and development of moral conduct. There is at present considerable difference among western philosophers, in their approach to the problems of ethics. Some follow the psychological path, considering the moral sense a development of instincts, emotions, desires, the will and self-directed purpose. Others, taking the sociological approach, consider

morals a social product, a development of time-honoured morals, which change under new economic, political, social and religious conditions.

SOCRATOV: The origin of morals is considerably discussed in Marxian literature. There are many differences among our thinkers on the problem. There are those who consider morals a product of social environment. The moral norms are set up by the ruling class, usually to justify and serve their interests and give sanction to the institutions of property and other class privileges. Other communist thinkers consider it necessary to make a distinction between the moral sense, which they trace to social instincts inherited from our animal ancestors, and the moral norms, which are a product of social conditions. Both, however, agree that there is no absolute morality and cannot be, so long as there is a class society. A universal human morality is only possible in a classless society.

THE HUMANIST: Ethics is my special field of interest. I believe that man is moral and therefore the universe is moral. Morality is more than a mode of behaviour. It is that voice within us that tells us, "Thou must!" Kant was right when he wrote that morals are more than a social expediency; they have an eternal value of their own. The essence of morality lies in absolute obedience to the "categorical imperative." Human acts must be subordinated to the universal moral laws of which the chief are (to use Kant's formulation): "Act as if the maxim of thy action were to become by thy will the universal law of action" and "so act as to treat humanity whether in thine own person or in that of any other in every case as an end and never as a means only." As a corollary of this absolute rational morality we must believe in real human freedom and in a divine cosmic power able to make virtue lead ultimately to happiness. Finally, the moral imperfections of this life demand conditions in which these limitations are overcome, and this justifies the belief in immortality. This, in my opinion, is the gist of Kant's ethical teaching. What have you to say in criticism of it?

SOCRATOV: The cardinal fault in Kant's formal ethics was

detected by Hegel. He pointed out the empty formalism of Kant's moral philosophy and rejected his " absolute free will " showing that free will is only a consciously recognized necessity and that moral development is therefore rooted in social relations. The striving towards the good is only one of the elements of the life process. Schopenhauer, who also criticised Kant's formalist ethics, refused to accept his rational will, tracing everything to the blind, irrational will-to-live. Morality according to Schopenhauer, consists not in following this inner urge, but in suppressing the egoistic impulses of the blind will. Marx recognized in Kant's formal ethics a German bourgeois adaptation of French liberalism. In his " St. Max " he writes :

> " He (Kant) like the German bourgeois, whose advocate he was, did not notice that at the basis of these theoretic ideas of the bourgeois lay material interests, and the will which was determined and conditioned by material productive relations. He therefore separated this theoretic expression of interests from the interests themselves and transformed the materially conditioned direction of the will of the French bourgeoisie into ' pure self-determination ' of the ' free will,' of the ' will-in-itself ' as a human will, making of it in this manner a purely ideological concept and the postulate of morality."

THE PROFESSOR : You might call this the sublimation of an inferiority complex.

THE REFORMIST : May I remind you of Kautsky's rather original interpretation of Kant's categorical imperative. Kautsky points out that what seems to Kant a product of the higher world is actually a product of the animal world. The moral law is nothing more than the survival of the social instinct of the animal. Man is conscious of it as a voice within, which appears to him a mysterious thing, with no relation to outer forces. This was considered to be the " demon " or " god " whose presence was felt by Socrates and Plato and, since them, by all who refuse to develop ethics from egoism or pleasure. This urge which appears so exceedingly mysterious is no more mysterious than sexual love or motherhood or the

general instinct of self-preservation. Moral judgment and the higher sense of duty or " conscience " originates not in our ability to reason but in the instinctive life.

SOCRATOV : There is some truth in Kautsky's analysis. However, in tracing the moral consciousness to the animal instincts, we must be on our guard not to lose our dialectical approach and drift into mechanist materialism. The social instincts and the moral emotions of men have the same origins, but are different in form and in quality. Social emotions which in one degree or another are similar to those of the gregarious animal are by no means the same thing. They are the product of the historical social process. Hence in our sense of the word, the animal realm has no morality. The mechanist materialist sees only the similarity between society and nature ; the idealist recognizes only their difference ; dialectical materialism accepts the unity of these differences. In this synthesis, morals are rooted in nature as the plant in the soil, but morality, like the plant, is qualitatively different from the soil in which it grows. The moral impulse cannot be reduced to primitive animal instinct. Social history is not the same as natural history. Marx expressed this thought very well in his *German Ideology*, where he says : " Consciousness is basically a historical product and will remain so as long as men exist. . . . Its beginning has as much of an animal nature as social life. . . . Man differs from sheep only in so far as his consciousness replaces his instinct or as his instinct has a conscious nature." While preserving the continuity of the historic process from nature to society, from the instinctive animal forms to the highest self-directed forms, he accepts this continuity dialectically, i.e. with breaks, or qualitative mutations.

THE HUMANIST : So you are essentially Darwinian in your conception of ethics.

SOCRATOV : Not in the way Darwinism is commonly interpreted in the West. Engels criticized Darwin not because he related man to the animal but because he over-emphasized the individual struggle for existence, which was but the natural-

ist's way of restating Hobbes's doctrine of the " war of all against all," and of applying the Malthusian theory to nature. " Both these conceptions," says Engels, " are justified within narrow limits . . . the interaction of living beings includes conscious and unconscious co-operation as well as conscious and unconscious struggle. One should not see in the vegetable and animal world only a one-sided struggle." The development of classes changed the blind instinct into conscious class interest and with it appears a class morality.

THE SENATOR: When we speak of morals, we ordinarily understand by it those modes of behaviour which are binding on all people. Morality in the civilized sense of the word must be a universal morality; to accept a class morality is to relapse into savage morality. It would mean that truth is not single, that each class has the right to claim something which is binding only on itself and not on those belonging to a different class. How would the life of a large nation like the U.S.A., for example, be possible under such a varying standard of morals? Again how are international relations and courts of international justice to be established if there are no common standards of morality for all people and classes?

SOCRATOV: The most immoral thing imaginable is the demoralization of morals. It is hypocritical to claim that there are universal morals. They exist neither in your country nor in my country. If in West Virginia and Kentucky miners on strike kill the hired thugs of the mining company employed to terrorize them into abandoning their right of organization, such acts of self-defence are interpreted by your courts as murder in the first degree. When, however, these thugs kill miners and destroy their property, the action is interpreted as a necessary measure to prevent interference with the property rights of the company. The ghosts of Sacco and Vanzetti are witness to the class justice of your courts. While Mooney and Billings of the working class are kept under lock and key; corrupt politicians like those of your recent oil cases and the members of the capitalist class who bribe them are allowed to go free. A similar attitude exists between the imperialist

nations and their subject peoples. In spite of the League of Nations, the Kellogg Pact and other solemn treaties, there is no single standard of morals in international relations among the nations who signed them. Think of China, numerically the largest people in the world, and of India, to say nothing of Haitians, Nicaraguans and other victims of capitalist imperialism. Why hypocritically defend these acts? Why not definitely confess that there is no universal morality? Why not say there is only a Hottentot morality, which resolves itself into: "It is good when I steal one of your wives; it is bad when you steal one of mine?"

THE PROFESSOR: Do you mean to say that yours is also a Hottentot morality?" You frankly recognize only a class morality?

SOCRATOV: Our faces are set toward a classless society, where a human morality will at last be possible. Meanwhile we recognize the *status quo* of class morals. We recognize, however, that at a given time the morals of one class are objectively progressive and revolutionary whereas the moral concepts of a class which has outlived itself are reactionary. There is the real difference between decadent capitalism and aspiring communism. Says Lenin:

> "At the basis of communist morality, lies the struggle for strengthening and completing communism. . . . Communist morality is that which serves this struggle, which unites the toilers against every exploitation, against every petty property interest . . . the old society was based upon such principles that either you rob the other or the other robs you, either you work for another or another works for you . . . it is clear that people educated in such societies imbibe, so to speak with their mother's milk the psychology, the habit, the concept of either the slave-owner or the slave or the petty property holder . . . such a psychology and such a mood cannot be in a communist . . . for a communist morality lies in this compact discipline of solidarity and the conscious mass struggle against exploiters."

From these premises it appears that the *summum bonum*—the highest good of communism is service to the interests of the workers of the world. Everything is good which promotes these interests, everything is bad that obstructs them.

THE REFORMIST: This is a kind of class utilitarianism, a further development of the utilitarianism of Bentham and Mill.

SOCRATOV: It is rather difficult to relate ourselves to the English utilitarians and to Western liberalism generally because of its individualistic and hedonistic outlook. On the other hand, we recognize in the work of Bentham and Mill a contribution to scientific method in the study of morals. They advanced the theory that an act must be tested by its consequences to the individual and to society. Their democratic maxim, the " greatest happiness of the greatest number " we do not accept, for it implies that the forces which contribute to human misery may be limited but not eradicated. We, on the contrary, are convinced that under communism poverty, disease and ignorance, the worst enemies of humanity will be stamped out and every member of society will have an equal opportunity for self-expression and self-development. Our present emphasis is on struggle and sacrifice. But our outlook for the future is bright. We are not pessimists. In looking forward to the revolutionary hegemony of the proletarian class, Lenin expected a bloody struggle and much sacrifice. On the occasion of the second congress of the Communist International, he wrote:

> " The hegemony and dictatorship of the proletariat is impossible without its readiness and capacity for the greatest sacrifice for the sake of victory over the bourgeoisie . . . the chief and practical significance in this respect is Russia's experience, where the proletariat could not have accomplished its dictatorship, could not have conquered the generally recognized respect and confidence of the whole working mass, if it had not sacrificed more, starved more, than all the remaining strata of this mass, at the most difficult time of the war and the blockade."

THE HUMANIST : Any discussion of the principles of morals is reduced in its final analysis to the question whether man is a free and responsible agent or whether his thoughts and deeds are determined. What is your position on this question ?

SOCRATOV : Marxism has nothing in common with that moral relativism and nihilism which rejects all morality and does not see the specific features which the historic development of social relations attaches to moral forms. Morality is a peculiar form of superstructure embracing both the actual relations of people as well as the specific, historically-determined form of social consciousness, which develops concepts of good and evil, justice and injustice. It thus presents definite social duties as a criterion of behaviour and is rooted in one or another concept of freedom and necessity in a given situation. All the specific moral superstructures and moral views are conditioned by the historic development of social relations and change with the latter. All categories of ethics therefore are social categories, historically conditioned and hence subject to change. Each of the three principal historic classes, the feudal aristocracy, the bourgeoisie, and the proletariat developed their own peculiar morals. Engels thus concludes that " people, consciously or unconsciously get their ethical views in the last analysis from the practical conditions of their class situation, from the economic relations conditioned by production and exchange. Morality has always been class morality. It either justified the lordship and interest of the ruling class or when the class of the oppressed became sufficiently strong, it expressed indignation against this rule and defended the future interests of the depressed."

THE BANKER : But what about the freedom of the will ?

SOCRATOV : Freedom consists not in an imagined independence from the laws of nature and of history, but in the understanding of these laws and in the possibility of using them for definite purposes. Thus the *freedom of the will means nothing but the ability to make decisions based on an intelligent knowledge of the situation. It is a conscious choice and decision based on the understanding of necessity.* Marx and Engels understood and

emphasized the role of the will in its historic setting. " The realm of freedom," says Marx, " begins actually at the point where work has ceased to be dictated by want and outer purpose; hence, in the nature of the case, it lies beyond specifically material production." In the field of material production, according to Marx, we shall always remain within the " realm of conscious necessity," which changes only with social development. In this sphere freedom may be considered only as a conscious rational force regulating and exchanging matter with nature. In this exchange man increasingly gains over nature by expending less force than he takes from nature. The free time and energy thus gained in this process of exchange becomes the basis of culture and makes true freedom possible. Communist society may become such a true kingdom of freedom and of liberty because it will guarantee to all the necessary material conditions for the development of human creativeness, which becomes an end in itself. You see, then, that we do not disregard free will, though we do not understand it metaphysically as was done by Kant, Schopenhauer and other idealists. Lenin emphasized purposeful direction in revolutionary action. " In moments of special inspiration," he says, " revolutions do accomplish things through the effort of human capacities, such as consciousness, will, the passions and the imagination of tens of millions driven on by an intense class struggle." To deny the part of will in revolutionary action, particularly at this period when the masses have awakened to consciousness and are no longer led by blind necessity but by a recognized purpose—would spell reaction.

THE BANKER: From your line of reasoning, I gather that freedom and morality without the conquest of nature and the leisure it brings are impossible. Can you deny that the capitalist social order with all its defects has alone of all systems been able to render these conditions available to an ever-increasing number of individuals? Yet you plot its destruction because of a utopian dream of equality. Careful studies made by our economists show that real wages have been steadily increasing during the last two or three decades and

particularly since the war. The middle class which, on your theory, is condemned to elimination has been steadily increasing in numbers and while we are suffering at present from a temporary economic depression, I can see no reason why the enlightened self-interest of the capitalist world could not overcome destructive competition and overproduction. After all we shall always have classes ; when you destroy one governing group you create another ; this has been the invariable experience of mankind. In every age there are those who lead and others who follow.

THE PROFESSOR : The primary object of capitalism is to carry on business and industry for profit. " To make money," not to render service, is the first law of its moral code. Business for profit finds its reward in itself. To acquire wealth is considered the most fascinating of all occupations and its reward is power. The politician is only the spokesman of the financial and business interests. The urge of capitalism is towards a continuous expansion and the concentration of financial power. It has long since crossed national boundaries and become imperialistic. Whereas in the struggle for monopoly at home, it first crushed its weaker competitors, it now extends its tentacles to weaker nations. This inevitably breeds war and war is the greatest vice of humanity. While capitalism has successfully used the machine for mass production, it has not solved the problem of the distribution of wealth. More than half of the wealth of capitalist countries is held by less than two per cent. of the population. This you might call the upper class. The middle class, about eight per cent. of the population, owns at least a third of the wealth, so that ten per cent. of the population owns eighty per cent. of its wealth. Economic crises like the present contribute to further changes in the ownership of wealth. Many members of the middle classes or those approaching these classes drop in the social scale and increase the number of the poor. While millions are starving in one part of the world, in another capitalists destroy food products and raw materials to boost prices. If this is the result of the much boasted efficiency of capitalism, what is

the outlook for the future? The tendencies of capitalism show personalized responsibility and absentee ownership. It is the highly-trained hired specialist who is responsible for technical improvements and increased production, not the owner. The profit motive underlying capitalism cannot reform distribution and the present problem of society is chiefly the problem of distribution. Extreme wealth, like extreme poverty, breeds vice. The standards set by the upper class are liable to imitation. The psychology of the plutocracy of America has poisoned our people. It has set up a criterion that judges people not by what they are but by what they possess. In the futile effort to imitate the standard of living of the upper classes, our people waste their energies and leisure in the consumption of unnecessary and harmful goods forced upon them by advertising. Under a different system they could turn their surplus time and energy to cultural pursuits.

THE SENATOR: Your indictment of capitalism contains facts which no enlightened person can deny. It is not the first time that we have heard such criticism. The question, however, is not about the shortcomings of capitalism, but about the alternatives. You charge capitalism with being selfish, with seeking profits, and yet you cannot deny that it has been this selfish motive that has made possible the maintenance of millions who could not have existed without the service of capitalism. We must take man as he is. This means we must recognize that the great dynamic of economic progress has been self-interest. I don't think you can find any other incentive which will make man work and save.

THE REFORMIST: The problem of incentives will in the final analysis decide the issue between capitalism and socialism. Can you compel any person to suffer the drudgery of modern machine production without a sufficient economic remuneration? Apparently not, otherwise Stalin would not have advanced his thesis of differentiation of wages according to service rendered. It seems that members of the communist party, the elite of the working class, work much more enthusiastically if they get better pay for their service. The fact

that you have had to abandon your maximum income system even for members of the party, seems to indicate that you are drifting back into capitalist ideology and are putting your trust in self interest.

SOCRATOV: For more than two weeks we have been talking about dialectics and yet you do not seem to have grasped its principal law. You still reason metaphysically. With you it is either egoism or altruism. You have forgotten the law of the interpenetration of opposites. We begin with an analysis of realities. Our problem is to increase production in the shortest possible time to meet the needs of our people, improve their health, create conditions which will fit them for creative work and at the same time make our country as much as possible independent of capitalist nations. We have not forgotten the intervention and the blockade and we know that the wild race in armaments among capitalist nations is not designed for the pleasure of the rich, or to give work to the unemployed. For these reasons we must co-operate with the motive forces available. We still have a generation with us which was trained under capitalism and we must use these people in the work which is before us. But we keep it under rigid control and the fact that we hold the power to change any regulation which we have ourselves introduced, decreases its dangers. We had similar experiences with the N.E.P. The capitalist world rejoiced that this meant a surrender to its principles, but the N.E.P. is already a thing of the past. Another year of successful collectivisation will eliminate it altogether. Meanwhile a new generation is growing up, trained in our Soviet schools. These young people know little of the old habits and ideas of their fathers. There is hardly a citizen in our country who has not grasped the idea and the advantages of a planned socialist economy. Capitalism has at its best about ten per cent. of stockholders who have a direct interest in industry and business. With us, every worker and peasant is a stockholder at par with every other. He knows it is *his* factory, *his* farm and *his* railway which he operates. He knows that every improvement, every labour-saving device and every other economy

will benefit him directly and this explains why in our country there is no opposition to rationalization, no strikes, but an unprecedented awakening of the creative participation of the masses. You have heard about our shock workers, about the emulative social competition which has accomplished wonders and is making the Five Year Plan a success in spite of all the prophecies to the contrary on the part of capitalist economists who claimed that our plans were utopian and contrary to economic laws. These prophets did not understand that under socialism a new set of laws unknown to them begins to operate, and that there are untapped resources in the masses which are not accessible under the capitalist system. The slogan, " The Five Year Plan in Four," was advanced by the workers and not by the government. Its success is due chiefly to the efforts of the workers. This is the dialectics of the process, while the old motivation is interpenetrating with the new, the latter has the lead and in due time will become dominant.

THE BANKER : If your new system is so efficient, why do you have to use such inhuman methods as compulsory labour and the terror of the G.P.U. to carry out your socialist programme ? Is not the price you pay in moral values much higher than anything you gain ?

SOCRATOV : I have not said that the new motivation has already eliminated the class struggle. We first fought the white armies and the capitalist interventionists and we gained our victory through the blood of millions of workers and peasants. Do you think it would be moral for us to betray our cause in the struggle with the village " kulak " and the remnants of the Nepman class ? These must be destroyed as a class just as the white armies were. But though we are relentless in our class struggle and give no quarter to the enemy class, we are most considerate to the individual class prisoner, and the anti-social criminal. We have taken the " kulak " out of his home environment, expropriated him and removed him to a new environment with plenty of opportunity to create the habit of socialised work. We believe in work as the best cure for all social ailments and therefore our rights of citizenship are

determined by this criterion. Anyone who lives on the work of others is discriminated against and has no right of franchise.

THE BANKER: What are your methods of punishing crime? And when do you apply the death sentence?

SOCRATOV: First of all, we have limited the maximum term of imprisonment to ten years, for we reason that if a man cannot be corrected in ten years he is hopeless. We have no prisons in the customary sense of the word. We have houses of correction which are usually colonies where the prisoners live in an isolated society, but carry on all its functions—work, education and social life. Rarely does a prisoner stay for his full term. As soon as he shows signs of improvement and has formed the habit of work and comradeship, he is conditionally released. Death sentences are rare They are imposed on incurable anti-social elements and the worst of our counter-revolutionary class enemies. Our criminal code is very flexible and our courts guide themselves, not so much by the formalities of the law, as by the circumstances and personality of the offenders. We know that moral norms change with the changing environment and therefore we are making every effort to change the environment in such a way as to produce socially desirable behaviour in individuals.

THE PROFESSOR: While I fully appreciate the importance of environment and there can be no question that to a large degree institutions shape men and events, yet they are not the only force. There is still the factor of heredity and of the individual variant, which no system of society or of ethics can disregard with impunity. If I have any criticisms to offer, it is that socialists usually put their emphasis on environment at the expense of these other important factors. At the same time this brings up the problem of the creative function of the individual as a social variant. To suppress the individual, means to condemn a society to the static condition which is characteristic of the savage.

SOCRATOV: While our emphasis is on changing the environment, our dialectical philosophy cannot disregard the biological factor. We have equipped special laboratories for the study

of heredity and for devising new eugenic methods. It is too early as yet to speak of the contribution that eugenics can make to the improvement of the human race. Its results have so far been rather negative. We know that syphilitics, feeble-minded and alcoholics should not be permitted to have progeny. For this reason we have made medical examinations compulsory by law before contracting marriage and hold syphilitics criminally responsible for infecting others by means of sexual intercourse. But how to attain a physically and mentally fitter species, this our eugenists have not as yet shown. For the time being, therefore, we put our trust in sexual attraction to improve the species. We have removed the economic, racial and legal barriers to contracting marriage and to terminating it easily if unsuccessful. At the same time we do our utmost to assist the family in the education and care of the children and, when necessary, take them away altogether to be reared in our state institutions. We are not against family life and the home, but we are against making a fetish of it and do not permit it to become a handicap to the social education of the new generation. As to individual liberty, I have already told you that this is possible only in a classless communist society. There the individual will not be handicapped by worries about squeezing out a living for himself and his family. He will have unlimited facilities for scientific research, for social and cultural activity. Under such conditions he should be able fully to express his creative abilities and thus to prevent society from growing static.

THE LEADER: We have had a profitable session discussing this highly important question of morals. It is time, however, to adjourn. To-morrow we may resume our conversation and as some of you requested we shall ask Comrade Socratov to discuss the subject of "Art under Communism."

DIALOGUE XVIII

In which the Philosophy of Art under Communism is discussed.

THE PROFESSOR : We have profitably conversed on that which is *true* and on that which is *good* ; and now we want to get your opinion on that which is *beautiful.*

THE HUMANIST : During our sojourn in Russia we have visited many museums, exhibitions, concerts and theatres. Everywhere we have been profoundly impressed by the high quality of your art ; but there is one thing which we consider unique in your country and unparalleled in any other which we have visited, and that is the fact that art and your art institutions have been included in your programme of popular education. Nowhere in the world are there so many visitors in museums and theatres and nowhere is there such a systematic use made of the existing art treasures for instructing people, with the aid of a trained personnel such as we found attached to each of your museums and exhibitions. These facts raise questions. What is the place of art in your system ? What is the function of art in the life of a people under socialism ?

SOCRATOV : We look on art as an ideological activity which expresses the emotions and thoughts of socialized man through artistic images. These images may be living and concrete, when the artists reproduce people, things and their relations. When art is one of the expressions of social consciousness, it differs from other aspects of this consciousness by imaging and reproducing actuality. But this reproduction is not mechanical as the vulgar materialists and the naive realists wrongly be-

lieved. Creative art recreates actuality by a complex dialectical process.

THE SENATOR: If you are carrying your dialectics over into the realm of art, what precisely do you mean by this? What is the dialectics of art?

SOCRATOV: The theory of art follows generally the same lines of division as the theory of knowledge. Kant and his school adhered to a transcendental "aesthetics." They hold that beauty is a subjective quality, though rather inconsistently the Kantians accept nature as a source of aesthetic enjoyment, and connect the symbolism of the beautiful with the good. The philosopher Schelling made a great step forward in treating the problem of aesthetics dialectically. As you may remember Schelling identifies the subjective with the objective. This identity, he perceives, is becoming evident in the work of art. Perfect perception of the real self by intelligence is only possible in the creation of art. Therefore the enjoyment of art is accompanied by a feeling of infinite satisfaction. In art there is effected a revelation of the absolute and therefore Schelling attaches to art a position of supreme importance, surpassing even that of philosophy. In Hegel's system art does not hold the exclusive place that it has in Schelling's thought. Still, Hegel views art as the first stage in the revelation of the absolute spirit, the stage in which it becomes perceptible to the senses. Beauty is thus the ideal conceived through the senses. While reflected in nature it is perfected in the human creations of art. According to Hegel, the most materially expressed arts, such as architecture, rank lowest in the hierarchy of the arts, and those of the arts which express themselves least materially as, for example, poetry, rank highest. In Schelling and Hegel we have thus a dialectical conception of art from the point of view of philosophic idealism. Naturally you will want to know in what way the concept of art in dialectical materialism differs from that of Schelling and Hegel. We, too, view art as the unity of the subjective and the objective. We, of course, see no revelations of the absolute in art. We do, however, recognize that art, while reflecting the natural and

social environment and being stimulated by it, is not its photographic copy, but a re-creation which possesses a new quality conditioned by the class consciousness of the artist. In this relation of the subject to actuality, art expresses not only the actuality but also its difference. This difference varies with the class nature of art. The revolutionary class as the ascending force has a greater amount of objectivity in its art, the decaying class which loses the consciousness of its power is less objective in its artistic creations.

THE HUMANIST: How terrible! Class struggle, class struggle everywhere, even in the sublime realm of the beautiful which should be a quiet island in the turbulent sea of the class struggle. Is there nothing sacred to you Bolsheviks? Can't you leave us at least the realm of the beautiful in which we may forget the stern realities of life? You are wrong with your class theory of art. Beauty is beauty and art is art, it has nothing to do with class struggle. It is as little related to it as this gorgeous sunset reflecting itself in the gilded domes of the Kremlin churches is related to your theories of the world revolution. Your theory does not correspond to the experience of the really artistic souls. Take Beethoven for example. The world knows no greater than him. Read him on art: "There is no happiness from the outside; you have to create everything out of yourself; only in the ideal world will you find joy . . ." then: "My realm is the air, like of the wind, when the tones whirl my soul whirls with them. . . " "I must despise the world which does not feel that music is a higher revelation." Is there anything utilitarian in this? The fine arts must be free from class contamination. They must arouse the emotions in obedience to the laws of rhythmic movement or utterance or of a regulated design. They must not be utilitarian but give permanent disinterested delight to all who have not lost their human sense.

SOCRATOV: This sublime humanitarian appreciation of art is possible only in a classless society. If we analyze the history of art, its records will not give this pleasing sensation, but will distinctly show you the class nature of every artistic creation.

I grant that there are many artists who attempted to shut themselves up in their art like a clam in its shell. They sought a mystic imaginary world uncontaminated by the realities of class-torn society. Such moments there no doubt were in the life experiences of the great Beethoven. He felt himself at odds with the decadent society he lived in. But he did not submit to it, nor did he flee into a mystic world. He became a rebel. His music testifies to this. It is aggressive, rebellious and dialectical. Above all other composers we recognize in him our great teacher and our musicians are conscious that in their creative work they must master Beethoven before they can reach a higher synthetic stage of musical creation. Permit me to remind you of G. Plekhanov's observation: "The leanings of artists and persons taking a lively interest in artistic creative endeavour towards art for art's sake arise as the result of the hopeless dissonance between themselves and the social environment." Wherever there exists a hopeless gulf between artists and the social order of which they happen to be a part, we find an emphasis on "art for art's sake" and a drift into mysticism. This was the case in France during the period of the romanticists and the parnassians and it is the case in most of Western Europe to-day.

THE PROFESSOR: There is one more aspect of this decadence of art in the West which must not be overlooked. Apart from mysticism and pessimism, there is also a great deal of cynicism. A good example is H. L. Mencken, the lion of literary and cultural criticism in America. His brazen cynicism has inspired many young intellectuals to scepticism and to distrust the scholastic opportunities offered in America. Many have lost the hope that it is possible to attain a real culture in their country. Although the American philistines had need of Mencken's critique, the tragedy is that he has nothing constructive to offer. He adheres to the tradition "rugged individualism." He despises the only alternative, socialism. Now his course is coming to an end. With many others of his kind, he will be relegated to the limbo where dwell the Don Quixotes of the pen. For, after all, like Don Quixote, he was

tilting at windmills and failed to storm the Bastille of capitalism in which the real enemy of modern civilization has fortified himself.

SOCRATOV : While it may be displeasing to the aesthetic taste, it nevertheless remains true that art is a weapon of the class struggle and throughout human history has been an implement of control in the hands of the governing classes. The emotions expressed in art are the thoughts and emotions of the master class when its power is in the ascendant. But when it has passed its zenith and is on the decline, it tries to obscure this fact by pleading for " pure " art. In the art of antiquity, during the ascendancy of feudal despotism, as for example in Egyptian art, it may be definitely seen how the governing class expressed its ideas of lordship through its arts. There the slave in all of his humiliating degradation is vividly pictured and the despotism of the master class divinely sanctioned. At present the relation of art to social life is well illustrated by a comparison of the development of art in the Soviet Union and in the capitalist countries of the West. Our arts are predominantly revolutionary. They play an important part in the creative activities of the country. But what is the situation in the West ? There art has largely lost the consciousness that it should serve life and lead it on towards profounder harmonic relations. Art is largely a personal caprice, a plaything of the rich. Art is expected to be entertaining. It must be distractive. It must not expose the realities of life, but rather obscure them. Thus art is degraded to serve as an opiate like alcohol, cocaine or vice. Those artists who are not willing to be the lackeys of the master class and cater to their caprice drift into black pessimism or other-worldly mysticism or they become grinning cynics with no hope of leading society towards a brighter future. Only the revolutionary and proletarian artists of the West who get their inspirations from vital contact with the creative work of our revolution, begin to emphasize through their art the existing contradictions in capitalism which can be resolved only through a proletarian revolution. This evident truth bourgeois artists

continually strive to obscure by the false ideal of "art for art's sake."

THE HUMANIST: I must concede that the governing classes in their lust for power, their pride and their anxiety to fortify their position, hold nothing sacred. They make use of all the attainments of the human mind and human emotions to serve their predatory interests, be it science, religion or art. While this is true, I still maintain that it is ethically wrong and should not be so. Throughout history there has been a continuous attempt on the part of the master class to make slaves of the artists, but the best of them have always revolted. Shelley in the "Ode to the West Wind," expresses this feeling:

> "Wild Spirit, which art moving everywhere. . . .
> Oh, lift me as a wave, a leaf, a cloud!
> One, too, like Thee; tameless, swift and proud."

This is the emotion of the true artist and no art is really art unless it is an outburst of the free unhampered emotions. It is no accident that the artists of all times have been anarchists despising the social order of which they were a part and rising against its philistine moral norms. Long live the artist's Bohemia!

THE BANKER: All this talk about the social and class function of art is bosh. When I enjoy a thing because it's pretty, I enjoy it. I don't ask myself questions about its purpose, its class or its morals. When it has any, it ceases to be a pleasure and becomes a business. To Mr. Ziegfield, a beautiful pair of legs may be an object of business, but when I go to a show it is pure pleasure. Can there be anything more enjoyable than a dancing beauty! Life is serious enough as it is. Why make it worse by depriving oneself of the bits of beauty which we occasionally may snatch along the way?

THE ROTARIAN: For some time I was connected with the advertising business. There I first learned the cash value of art. If you want to sell your goods, make them attractive.

We may not think of business when we enjoy pretty things, but I tell you business certainly thinks of art to sell its goods.

SOCRATOV: You might say that the idea of art for art's sake is transformed at present into art for money's sake. This was observed by Marx many decades ago, when he wrote his *Poverty of Philosophy*.

> "There was a time, as in the Middle Ages, when only the superfluity, the excess of production over consumption was exchanged. There was again a time when not only the superfluity but all the products, the whole of the industrial existence entered into commerce, in which the whole production depended on exchange. . . . Lastly, there comes a time when all that men have regarded as inalienable becomes the object of exchange, of traffic and can be disposed of. It is the time in which even the things which until then had been communicated, but never exchanged; given, but never sold; acquired, but never bought—virtue, love, opinion, science, conscience, etc.—will all at last enter into commerce."

You see thus that any humanitarian aspiration for art, as for any other cultural value, is quite impossible in a class society, particularly in a capitalist class society where everything becomes an object of commerce. When under communism the classes disappear, there will be still the problem of how to find the relationship between the group and the individual in which the development of both will be facilitated. They cannot exist apart from each other and must remain in such a relationship that mutual growth is possible. Capitalism once prided itself that it had created conditions in which the individual might develop himself fully. At present, however, it has reached a deadlock where neither the individual nor the community can progress. To live in society and to be free from society is impossible. This generally recognized fact provides the setting for the problems of the artist.

THE REFORMIST: In my opinion art and play belong together, art being but the development of the play instincts in man. When the poet, F. Schiller, wrote his "Letter on the Aesthetic

Education of Man," he gave us a clue to the understanding of art and its place in society. Schiller made an attempt to overcome the Kantian dualism which places man between the determining forces of nature on the one hand and the equally compelling moral law on the other. These are the " Stofftrieb " and the " Formtrieb " of Schiller, from which man finds his escape in the " Spieltrieb "—that is, in play. Here is a possible solution of the contradictions between the realm of matter and the realm of beauty and the reconciliation is accomplished in play. Art as Schiller understood it is unrestrained playful creation without any particular purpose except the inner satisfaction which man receives from this activity or the enjoyment of observing it.

THE PROFESSOR : While play undoubtedly has contributed to the development of art, it is by no means so disinterested and purposeless as it might seem, if we study its origins. Anthropological research has stripped it of its romanticism. The play of primitive man, like that of the animals, comes from a utilitarian instinct through which the young learn and practise many of the useful acts which fit them for life in the adult state. The chase and the war games so popular among the young played a necessary part in equipping primitive man for survival. Then take the impulse for mimicry and imitation which prompted pantomime dance, music and dramatic art. These were practised, not for pleasure, but as magic rituals to reconcile the threatening forces of nature or to bewitch one's enemies or the opposite sex. The same is true of the arts of carving, mask-making, tattooing of the body ; all these had their utilitarian purpose either of frightening the enemy or impressing one's dignity upon the kin. Finally take the impulse to record one's emotional experience, which is the origin of the art of drawing and writing. It, too, had its utilitarian significance. These symbols were to preserve the experiences of the author for the benefit of future generations. Such were the scratchings on the cave walls of the primitive dwellings of man and upon bones. The question arises—when did these utilitarian activities of men take on the value of

art? I think the answer is that it became art when it was discovered that these plays, mimicrys and recordings yield emotional satisfaction both to the author and to the spectators. Man's instinctive activities became art when their productions attained a new emotional quality not reducible to its original utilitarian purport.

THE SENATOR: This sounds like a plausible explanation of the beginning of art. We, however, have gone far ahead of this primitive stage and to us there is the question—what is the problem of the artist in the present?

SOCRATOV: I can speak only of the problems which concern our artists. The one common to them all is of a social and psychological nature. Our artist must be able to sense the revolutionary psychology of the masses. He must become conscious that his art is a weapon of the class struggle. He must be able to focus in his consciousness the emotions, the thoughts and the will of the masses. He must recreate these emotions in concrete images which are intelligible to the people. The productions of the artist must be prophetic. He must show what the latent social and psychological forces once let loose can become, if properly guided. Thus the artist procreates the future in his images. This makes him important to a revolutionary period and pushes him into the ranks of leadership.

THE HUMANIST: This is quite intelligible as a general philosophic presupposition for communist art, yet the fine arts are of such subtle nature! Each must have many specific problems. Tell us what you consider the task of your architecture, sculpture, painting, music and of your dramatic arts?

SOCRATOV: In the shaping arts such as architecture and sculpture, our problem is to find its proper application and expression in answer to the needs of our epoch. Monumental architecture has now an unprecedented opportunity for creative activity. While we do not construct cathedrals and palaces to please royalty and the leisured class, we build magnificent palaces of labour, government buildings, assembly and exhibition halls, libraries and theatres. These structures must be more than

buildings for use. Their equipment and decoration must meet the demands of the cultural interests of the masses. Each building must express and arouse emotions in the masses which will make them fully conscious of their place and purpose in this new era which has been inaugurated by the proletarian revolution, with its world-wide outlook of human brotherhood. This internationalism in architectural design and ornament is in itself unique, since hitherto all public buildings have been notoriously nationalistic. . . . Apart from monumental structures for public use our architects are confronted with the problem of designing new socialist cities and communal farm settlements in which the difference between the city and country should disappear in a higher synthesis of these merging interests. These new cities and settlements will combine agricultural and manufacturing activities. They must have all modern conveniences in the distribution of supplies, in transportation, for cultural pursuits and in the sanitary housing of the workers. All these must develop upon a background of natural beauty. Even now, the slums and ghettoes of the old cities are rapidly disappearing and giving place to centres of communist culture and activity. New developments in architecture have also revived the art of sculpture which formerly catered exclusively for the leisure class. Our sculptors are applying themselves to the task of bringing before the people the heroes of toil and of decorating the great new monumental structures which are rising everywhere throughout our land.

THE ROTARIAN: What about this new palace of the Soviets, which we have read so much about? Do you think you will be able to build anything comparable to the magnificent cathedral which is being dismantled?

SOCRATOV: The cathedral was built as a memorial to Tsarist reaction after the defeat of Napoleon. Our palace of the Soviets will be a monument to the triumph of the proletarian revolution and its great constructive activities. The new palace will embody the best that we are able to contribute in architectural design, and as a work of art it will reveal to the world the spirit which moves our revolution.

THE HUMANIST: We have been enjoying the delicate designs and colour work of the Palekh village artists and the monumental paintings which decorate the walls of your Tretyakov Gallery. Do you think that under socialism there will still be incentive enough to inspire and foster these arts or will they die with the class under which they came into existence and which patronizes them?

SOCRATOV: Our policy is to make all the fine arts accessible to the widest possible number of the toiling population. This called for the mobilisation of all the art resources of the nation. Formerly most of the art treasures of the country were buried in the palaces of the rich and enjoyed by very few people. Now all these treasures have been systematically distributed to hundreds of new museums throughout the Union and are made accessible to millions, who are showing profound appreciation of these art treasures. You were impressed by the mass attendance at our museums and the eager interest of the visitors. While the consumption of art has enormously increased, there is also an unprecedented growth of art production. At present there are thousands of amateur art studios, each attached to a school or factory club. From these tens of thousands of amateurs the most talented are elected annually and are sent to the newly organized art schools, in which faculty and students are maintained at the expense of the government. Peasants from villages where formerly Ikon painting was practised as a side occupation, such as Palekh village, are now also equipped with schools. Their art is being directed into new channels to serve the cultural needs of the people. Most of these villagers and workers after receiving their training return to their districts and are engaged as teachers and directors of art activities in schools and clubs. Others are employed by publishing houses as magazine and book illustraters, and as designers of agitational and educational art posters. Others go into industry, as textile and porcelain designers for instance. Others again who show ability as painters of monumental works, find ample opportunities to express themselves in symbolizing the revolutionary pathos of

our era of construction. Our young Soviet artists are organically related to the new life. Their training is much more inclusive than it was in the past. Apart from the technique of their art they study the social and natural sciences and actively participate in the activities of Soviet society.

THE SENATOR: Now this is very interesting. It shows that your statesmen appreciate the value of the fine arts as a force of control, direction and inspiration. In our country, unfortunately, only the commercial and advertising interests have caught this vision and use it successfully to promote the sale of their goods. You, however, use art to sell your ideas.

THE HUMANIST: I suppose that similar efforts are made to select musicians, poets and dramatists. In some of your literature I notice the emphasis which is put on proletarian music, literature and drama. What do you mean by this? Do you think that proletarian art should have a different quality from other modern art creations? We don't talk about capitalist music or literature. Do you really believe that class lines can be drawn in such subtle matters as the arts of music and speech which appeal to our emotions through sound and tone?

SOCRATOV: Music is no exception to the other fine arts. It reflects the spirit of the age as much as architecture, painting or poetry. Do you not sense the difference between a Mozart minuet and American jazz? Between the romantic Viennese waltz and the modern grotesquely sensuous shimmy? Our revolutionary proletarian composers are fully conscious that music is an implement of the class struggle. Proletarian music reflects the many-sided psychology of the proletariat. Its task is to penetrate subtly and deeply into the very substratum of the consciousness of the worker and peasant masses. It must unite their emotions, their thoughts and their will, spur them on in the struggle to overcome class enemies and encourage them in the constructive work of creating the new social order. This is the purpose and the creative principle of proletarian music. The new style and the new forms of this music are born from the class content of its ideas, develop-

ing in the process of practical creative work. In this development music does not disregard the legacy of the past. It approaches it critically and assimilates such of its elements as express the ideology of the newly rising proletarian class. The dialectics of the proletarian music lie in its continuity with past culture together with a break which is expressed in its new quality. It parts company with bourgeois music where the latter enters the stage of pure aestheticism and decadence. In following its own way it looks forward to the monumental form foreshadowed in the works of Beethoven and Mussorgsky, both of whom our composers find it necessary to master critically. We are now at this stage. Many of our younger musicians are training themselves to tackle this gigantic task. We have no doubt that they are on the right track and we look forward to a new creative period which will do justice to the promise of our revolutionary era.

THE REFORMIST: My impression is that the new Soviet art finds its most powerful expression in the revolutionary drama and that the theatre is the most suitable art institution to meet the interests of the proletariat.

SOCRATOV: The modern theatre as well as the perfected technique of cinematography have developed into great synthetic art institutions. Here, in buildings of superb architecture, poetry, music, the dance and the decorative arts all merge into a marvellous spectacle. For this reason we pay so much attention to the theatre. Deprived of its commercial dependence it develops into a most powerful, popular educational institution, inspiring our masses for the struggle of socialism. It paves the way to a profound cultural revolution. Our slogan is "for a monumental art in Bolshevism," which implies the passing of national boundaries not only within the limits of the U.S.S.R. but of the whole world. Our task is to express with profundity, completeness and superb beauty the creative work of the great revolutionary class challenging the world.

THE PROFESSOR: Your outlook is magnificent and promising, but to cope with it you will have to educate a new generation and make it fit to carry through this cultural revolution which

the first generation of Bolsheviks have inaugurated so successfully.

THE LEADER: Education and the cultural revolution is certainly a big subject which we ought to discuss at our next session. For to-day let us ponder over the ideas our discussion has brought out and adjourn until to-morrow.

DIALOGUE XIX

In which the Philosophy of Communist Education and the Cultural Revolution is presented.

THE LEADER: We all are aware of the significance which education will have in deciding the future of this country. The idea of conscious self-direction towards the communist goal is very promising provided there is an educational system capable of the task.

THE PROFESSOR: What we ought to discuss is the differences and the peculiarities of communist education as compared with the Western system. We want to know the underlying theory or philosophy of communist education, its principal methods and modes of organization, as well as its present position and its plans for the future.

SOCRATOV: You all are aware that under the Tsarist régime education, such as it was, was accessible only to a small part of the population. There was an impassable gulf between the elementary and secondary schools. The latter were accessible only to the nobility and the bourgeoisie. The workers, the peasants and the national minorities were practically excluded from higher education. In this way the ruling classes hoped to maintain their power, thinking that the ignorance of the masses was a protection for them. More than half the population was illiterate and the rest had an imperfect knowledge of the four " R's."

THE ROTARIAN: We talk about three " R's." Which do you call the fourth ?

SOCRATOV: Religion, upon which the Tsarist school laid a greater emphasis than on any of the other three.

THE REFORMIST: Did the Church also supervise public

education or was the old school generally independent of the Church ?

SOCRATOV : Unlike the Roman Church and the Protestant Churches, the Russian Orthodox Church was antagonistic to educational activity, considering education opposed to piety. Only reluctantly, therefore, and under pressure of the government did it enter the field of education. The revolution of 1905 revealed that the Russian public school teacher was undependable. Many of the teachers were revolutionists or sympathetic to revolution. The Tsarist régime therefore turned to the Church and planned, through the opening of parochial schools, to create a system of public education which would be more amenable to the interests of the government. But the parochial school system developed slowly and never controlled more than thirty per cent. of the public schools in the empire, the remainder being supported either by the municipalities or by the Zemstvos. These latter were rural, pseudo self-governments controlled by the gentry and the provincial governors appointed by the Tsar. Besides these there were a few private schools, mostly of the secondary grade, and several privately endowed colleges and institutes, but generally higher education was directly under the control of the central government.

THE SENATOR : How do the numbers of children at school now compare with the pre-revolutionary enrolment ?

SOCRATOV : In 1914 there were 7,800,000 children in the primary and secondary schools. At present (1931) we have over 20,000,000, and the number is daily increasing. We have passed a law establishing compulsory education, which is being rapidly enforced. Our greatest problem is to provide schools for the culturally backward national and racial minorities, many of which have never had a written language. By now we have developed schools in seventy languages and we have a special department at the academy of sciences which develops writing and composes textbooks for those races which have so far not had any alphabet of their own. We have also Latinized the Tartar and Turk languages and so overcome the difficulties

which the Arabic script presented. Besides the enrolment in the public schools we have over 1,400,000 children in the technicums and factory schools. And the rate of increase is steadily rising. Within a few years illiteracy will be wiped out altogether. There are hardly any persons now under the age of forty who do not read and write. The best illustration of this increased literacy is that under the Tsarist régime the daily circulation of newspapers was 2,750,000. In 1930 this had increased to 27,000,000. An interesting fact is that these papers are largely written by the people. In 1930 there were registered 2,000,000 worker and peasant correspondents. Among these were 7,560 children correspondents. Some papers like the *Peasant Gazette* receive from 200 to 300 letters daily which tell what is going on in the minds of millions of their readers in the villages.

THE HUMANIST: How interesting! These correspondents must furnish much more reliable information than professional, sensation-hunting reporters.

SOCRATOV: The chief difference in our educational system is not, however, in numbers, although these also indicate something, it is rather in the under-lying principle of our educational system. In old Russia there were several systems, one for the common people, another for the middle class and a third for the aristocracy. Between these there were impassable gulfs and class lines were rigidly maintained. Our system, on the contrary, is a single system with a continuity of grades from the kindergarten to the university. All our schools are co-educational. We have declared war not only against the double standard in morals but also against the double standard in intellectual matters and in wages which is so common in capitalist countries, the women being always the underpaid workers.

THE REFORMIST: Would you briefly indicate to us the gradations in your school system and tell us something about those so-called "Rabfaks" or workers' faculties? And I would also like to know something of party education and why such a system is necessary.

SOCRATOV : Our school system may be roughly divided into the pre-school system (day nurseries and kindergartens), the primary schools, the secondary schools, the factory schools and technicums, special training schools, specialized higher training schools for the various professions and research institutes, many of which are attached to the U.S.S.R. academy of sciences. Then there is a separate system for vocational, political and cultural purposes, carrying on activity through study circles in the factory clubs, the village reading rooms and an extensive programme of correspondence courses. Our State publishing houses, art galleries and museums, cinema productions and theatres are also considered a part of the educational system. The " Rabfaks " have developed as an emergency institution and as such will continue their existence for some time. When the workers took power after the October revolution, there was a shortage of trained leadership. The " Rabfaks " prepared the workers to enter the universities and special technical schools. Their curriculum corresponds generally to that of the secondary schools, with some emphasis on specialization. At present many of the best shock-workers have been placed in the " Rabfaks " to prepare them for leadership. Young people from the backward national minorities are also trained for leadership in their respective republics. The party school system is necessary to train a personnel for party work and leadership. The party schools are graded correspondingly to the secondary and higher institutions, culminating in the Communist Academy and the Institute of Red Professors. These latter institutions provide teachers of communist ideology and give general direction to communist thought in all branches of knowledge.

THE SENATOR : You have just mentioned the training of a new leadership for the national minorities. Previously you told us that your constitution provides cultural autonomy in the native language of the various races and nationalities. Don't you think that you are jeopardizing the unity of your country by fostering this Babel ? And how does all this fit into the much-lauded internationalism for which your party stands ?

SOCRATOV : I think that we have tackled this rather complex problem of the national cultures and languages wisely. We have already demonstrated that internationalism is possible without violating the cultural and linguistic peculiarities of the various nationalities. The Soviet policy on the problem was worked out by Joseph Stalin under the direction of Lenin. Stalin has frequently expressed himself on this issue. I shall quote to you a few paragraphs from his report to the sixteenth congress of the party which will answer your query :

> " It may seem strange that we who favour in the future the merging of the national cultures into one culture, general in form and content, with one common language, at the same time favour the flourishing of national cultures during the present dictatorship of the proletariat. But there is nothing strange in this, it is necessary to give the national cultures the opportunity for development to show all their potentialities in order to create conditions for their merging into one general culture with a common language. The flourishing of cultures, national in form and socialist in content at this period of dictatorship of the proletariat in one country to be merged into one general socialist culture (both in form and content) with one common language will be possible when the proletariat conquers the whole world and socialism becomes a part of every day life. These facts contain the dialectics of Lenin's formulation of the problem of national cultures."

Thus the emphasis at this stage of our development is on culture which is *national in form* and *socialist in content*. Our solidarity lies, therefore, not in the form but in the content of culture.

THE ROTARIAN : Stalin says that you are looking forward to one common language. You probably expect that soon everybody will begin to learn Russian.

SOCRATOV : Although it is true that all of our national minorities and that communists everywhere are becoming interested in Russian, we by no means insist that Russian should become the international language of the future. It may be that

Esperanto or a simplified English will be the language of the brotherhood of nations. Our young people are diligently studying the principal modern languages, particularly English and German.

THE HUMANIST : In putting such emphasis on education and in making it so democratic and accessible you show that you believe that man can be changed by education. Are you aware, however, that you proceed on a hypothesis which is still to be proven ? You seem to take it for granted that culture is the common aspiration of the masses, instead of being the prerogative of the elect few. In our country, we offer cultural opportunities to anyone who wishes to make use of them. Yet the majority prefer eating, drinking, sex and other vulgar pleasures. For everyone we can persuade to come to a lecture on the fine arts, the achievements of science or a concert of symphonic music, a hundred prefer to pay high prices to watch a prize fight or a vulgar cabaret with jazz music. I doubt whether the intrinsic interests of man are cultural. I am inclined to believe that culture, no matter how democratized, will be genuinely appreciated and fostered only by the few.

THE BANKER : I think we waste a lot of money on education and art which is not at all appreciated by the majority of the people. My experience is, that if you give a man a motor car, a bit of booze, a chance to dance with a nice girl, a funny movie or a game of cards that is about all the culture he can stand or cares for. By and by you will find it true in Russia. Of course there will always be a few freaks who want to talk philosophy and art and run to lectures and exhibitions, but that is not big business. It is not what the people really want. If we are democratic, we have to face the facts and let the folks have what they really enjoy.

SOCRATOV : If that is the situation in your country, it only shows how hopeless the cultural outlook of bourgeois society is. We realize that man is not born with a taste for the classics, but it is also true that such tastes can be developed in normal beings provided the conditions are favourable. The problem of education is to give proper recognition to what is commonly

called nature and nurture. The hereditary or natural endowment of man consists of potentialities, of instincts and impulses which may develop into socially and culturally desirable or into socially harmful habits and interests. The educator must know the resources and limitations of the hereditary bio-psychological factors. These may be improved in coming generations by eugenic measures. But as matters stand now, the educator has to depend chiefly on nurture, on the stimulation and control of the innate faculties by means of a favourable environment. Education is habit-formation. In a capitalist society where even cultural values are commercialized, a favourable cultural environment for the rank and file is next to impossible. Commercialized culture appeals to the baser instincts, like sex and pugnacity, and the real artist has a poor chance to compete with commercialized culture. The latter will always get the masses and the real artist will have to content himself with the few. We, therefore, who control the output of cultural products whether books, pictures, drama, the film and the concert programmes do not permit any vulgar or base products of culture to be presented to the public. We surround our children with culture of a high quality. They do not know that any other exists. In this manner they develop good taste and in mature life will hardly enjoy anything cheap and vulgar. But this is only possible in a socialist society where the commercial incentive is removed, where the exploitation of the leisure of the masses is not allowed to become "big business."

THE REFORMIST: If you want to develop good taste in the masses you must start at an early age. That means that the State has to be nurse, school master and entertainer, besides a lot of other things.

SOCRATOV: Precisely so. Our ambition is to take charge of babies even before they are born, placing the expectant mother in surroundings where the child can have a favourable prenatal development. As far as our still limited means permit we already do this. We free the expectant mother from work in the factories two months before and two months after birth,

besides paying her maintenance. We provide lying-in hospitals, day nurseries, kindergartens, playgrounds and so on through all the stages of social and professional education. Our party programme formulates its views on education in these terms :

> " To transform the school from an implement of the class domination of the bourgeoisie into a weapon for the complete annihilation of the division of society into classes. We make it an implement of the communist regeneration of society . . . the school should not only be the agent for applying the principles of communism generally, but equally the agent of ideological and organizational education, influencing the proletarian, semi-proletarian and non-proletarian strata of the toiling population. Its goal is to educate a generation which will be able completely to establish communism."

THE PROFESSOR : That places a gigantic task upon your teachers. I wonder whether they fully realize the strategic position which the school is to occupy in this process of reconstructing society on an entirely new basis. You will have to face tremendous difficulties. They arise not only from class differences but also from vocational differences, such as those between the work of the peasant and the work of the factory employee, to say nothing of the brain workers. These are knotty problems which will frustrate your noble ambition for a classless society unless you solve them.

SOCRATOV : Gradually our teachers are becoming conscious of the gigantic task which socialist society puts upon them. To most of them this new task is a powerful challenge, stimulating them to tackle the problem. They are working very hard at present to fit themselves for the task. We realize that we shall fail in our educational aims unless we succeed in solving the contradictions which divide the city from the village, the physical worker from the intellectual worker and the artist. There is, besides, the age-long double standard, which we have to overcome by all means. These problems are before us. We are fully conscious of their significance.

We lay our plans to solve them. We are sure that our socialist order makes their solution possible.

THE SENATOR: We are curious to learn what you can do about them. I doubt whether, even with your socialist schemes, you will be able to overcome the differences which nature itself has provided.

SOCRATOV: Always throwing the responsibility on nature! Do you not realize that men armed with the weapon of science, possessed by vision and determination, can make nature serve their ends? The older materialists, as Marx already observed, thought that people were the product of circumstances and education. When people changed this meant that they were the product of other circumstances and of changed education. Marx did not fully agree with this point of view. He points out that "circumstances are changed by the people themselves and the educator must himself be educated." Changes can be achieved by rational understanding and if there is no other way, these changes can be brought about by revolutionary practice. We expect to overcome the differences between the city and the rural community by merging agricultural and industrial production in huge agro-industrial combines. On this new economic foundation will rise a new social life. Many new industries will develop in the former farming communities. The collectivisation and industrialization of farming is the beginning of this process. The social changes which follow this economic reconstruction are phenomenal and are taking place right before our eyes. In this great work the school is taking an active part by training a new generation to cope with the new situation.

THE HUMANIST: A most interesting venture! It will do away with the waste of seasonal work so common in agriculture and in some industries. If you are able to solve this problem satisfactorily, that alone will put you far ahead of any capitalist nations. Still, it does not yet solve the problem of the contradictions arising from the division of intellectual and physical labour.

SOCRATOV: Our hope in the solution of this problem lies in

polytechnical education and the merging of the school with industry. The idea for this type of education was advanced by Marx and Engels who observed it in the experiments of Robert Owen at his New Lanark school. Marx comments on this problem in his first volume of *Capital*. He says :

> " From the factory system—this can be observed at Robert Owen's—arises the germ of the education of the future which for children above a certain age unites productive work with teaching and gymnastics and this will not only be a method for increasing social production, but the only method of production of people with an all-round development."

Again, in his *Critique of the Gotha Programme*, he says : " Early co-ordination of productive work with teaching is a mighty weapon for transforming contemporary society." In these pronouncements we have the principles of an all-sided, polytechnical education.

THE SENATOR : What do you really mean by polytechnical education ? Does it presuppose the learning of a trade or of certain operations in factory production ? How in the world will you be able to accomplish this. If you let the kids loose on a plant, they'll soon make a mess of it. You cannot continue production successfully under such conditions.

SOCRATOV : A polytechnical school system presupposes simultaneously, intellectual activities such as the study of mathematics, the natural and social sciences, physical development through gynmastics and play and systematic manual work. We are equipping our schools with hand and machine tools and with the basic materials for wood, metal, cloth, paper production. The children learn the nature of these materials and the principal processes of production. Polytechnical education begins in pre-school activities when the children acquire the habit of working with the lighter materials, such as paper, cardboard and clay. Gradually this work becomes more complicated. At thirteen years of age the children are introduced to machine tools and heavier materials. These studies continue through the secondary schools, technicums,

and the higher schools of university rank. And so we merge the work in secondary schools and technicums with the great industrial and agricultural enterprises. The schools are included in the actual productive processes. Their output figures in the plan of production of the country. Schools which are as yet not directly merged with industry are equipped with laboratories and workshops and supplement their knowledge of the productive processes by frequent excursions to various plants and research institutes. Of course *all* students of the higher schools are attached to some industry and regularly spend a part of their time in these plants. The industry sets apart some of its equipment and a building to house the students, and carries on its budget the cost of their upkeep together with the maintenance of the whole teaching force. On the other hand it benefits by the work of these students and receives well qualified technical personnel. Because of the constant contact with industry throughout their school years, the students become familiar with the technical processes of the industry in which they are specializing.

PROFESSOR: We heard about this reform of your higher education, but we thought it only existed on paper. Now from what you say we see that it is actually in operation. Have you been able to observe how this close contact with industry affects the mentality of the students?

SOCRATOV: Students lose consciousness of a difference between mental and physical work, because these two continually merge throughout their school work. Formerly our intellectuals despised physical work very much. We found out, too, that the actual productive process is a powerful disciplining force. Unruly youngsters who cannot be disciplined by teacher or parent submit to the uncompromising force of the machine and the demand of the material to be handled just so and not otherwise. You cannot plane a board smoothly against the grain. Physical work is a tonic. It has a great moral force. Even the wild, homeless children and criminal elements are cured of their anti-social habits by the wholesome atmosphere of the workshop and the laboratory.

THE HUMANIST: All this is wise and good. But not all children intend to become factory hands, technicians or engineers. What are you going to do with those who have an artistic trend of mind or are interested in abstract science and philosophic generalization? I am afraid that under such a system you cannot develop great artists, scientists and philosophers.

SOCRATOV: A legitimate question. We have organized a system of art technicums and academies, many institutes for scientific research and training in the art of teaching. Yet even these artists, scholars and philosophers are not exempt from polytechnical education. They get it in the primary and secondary grades. When they reveal a special talent for art or abstract studies and are placed in the proper schools, they are still kept in constant touch with the productive processes in industry. Our young artists spend their summers on the great construction works, where they frequently participate directly in the building processes. Painters sketch the productive movements of the workers, paint the men at work and the magnificent feats of engineering which they have performed. Musicians catch the rhythm of creative work. They have opportunity to create the new symphony of socialist construction. The poets, playwrights and novelists are inspired to write great dramatic epics of the constructive era and even the philosopher goes to observe the dialectic process of the interpenetration of the creative function of the mind with the forces of nature. He has ample opportunity to observe man at work, to study his psychology as well as to enlighten the workers in the ideology of creative communism.

THE REFORMIST: Would you call this the cultural revolution? Or what else does that term imply?

SOCRATOV: The cultural revolution is a new concept of the place of work and leisure in the life of a people. It aims at nothing less than the re-making of man, the changing of his aims, interests and his very mental constitution. In the past the masses lived in order to work, sweat, squeeze out a subsistence for themselves and leave a sufficient margin of the fruits

of their toil to maintain the privileged few, giving them abundant leisure and opportunities to develop the cultural life. The cultural revolution is rapidly changing the degraded condition of the masses. Now all the toiling population is to enjoy the opportunity for self-development in an environment of newly-growing culture. The machine which formerly enslaved man is becoming under socialism his emancipator. Nature, controlled by science and exploited by the machine, is producing abundantly, supplying the wants of all and providing all with sufficient leisure, which, however, is not wasted in vulgar enjoyment, but utilized to attain cultural values and develop spiritual interests. In the past the overwhelming majority lived in order to work, the cultural revolution reverses this situation. Under capitalism man lives in order to work ; under communism man works in order to live. Since profit is not our prime incentive, we aim at making work an educational function and a pleasure rather than a drudgery. Engels in his *Principles of Communism*, observed that

> " Education will permit young people quickly to acquaint themselves with the whole system of production, it will permit them to pass in turn from one branch of industry to another according to the needs of society or their personal leanings. In this manner it will free them from that one-sidedness which is produced at present by a division of labour. In this manner society organized on communist principles will give its members the opportunity to develop and apply their various abilities. But together with this, necessarily, disappear the various classes."

The cultural revolution will do away with the old division between work and education, between mental and physical activity. Lenin, looking forward to this revolution said : " Each mill, factory and electric station must be made a place of education."

THE BANKER : From what you have said so far we may conclude that your system of education leaves no place for religious instruction. What about moral education ? Aren't you teaching your children morals ?

SOCRATOV: We do not regard morals as distinct from the social creative and cultural life. All of it must be profoundly moral. No catechism on moral norms or any list of " don'ts " will make the children moral if they do not derive these norms from their actual social life and the aims of their activities. Lenin defined morals as " that which serves the destruction of the old exploiting society and the gathering of the toilers around the proletariat which builds the new society of communism." His conclusion was " that at the basis of communist morality lies the struggle for strengthening and completing communism," and that " it is necessary that the whole matter of education and training of present-day youth should be an education in communist morals." True to Lenin's principles we guide our children to self-activity and develop in them an international outlook with comradly feeling towards their schoolmates, regardless of race and sex. They are brought continually in contact with the great construction schemes of socialism and with the life of the community. We know that many children still live in unwholesome homes. Parents are socially backward and sometimes even counter-revolutionary. This naturally affects the child. In our schools we observe remnants of the old individualistic property morality, of racial intolerance—particularly anti-semitism—occasional sex abnormalities and similar anti-social behaviour. We do not shut our eyes to these disgraceful remnants of the past. We fight them by constructive measures. We absorb the children in community activities, surround them with opportunities for wholesome play. We believe in co-education as the best means of creating comradeship between the sexes and impress upon them a single standard of morals. Our communist children's and youth organizations, the Young Pioneers and Komsomols, set a vivid example of discipline, social activity and wholesome morality to the young of the country. Our new Five Year Plan will provide the additional equipment and proper buildings to make it possible to develop our work under more favourable conditions than we have at present.

THE SENATOR: So you are already preparing another Five Year Plan. Is it to include education? And what do you expect it to accomplish for your cultural revolution?

SOCRATOV: Our second Five Year Plan will develop the advantages gained by the first. At present we are laying the foundations for our heavy industries and transportation. Our present educational and cultural work aims at providing the new industries with a trained personnel, although we cannot devote as much attention to some aspects of their cultural life as we would like. But we shall make up for it during the next quinquennium. Our aim is to meet the demands of all educational and cultural activities by one hundred per cent. There must be a place for every child under school age in nurseries and kindergartens to give them the proper start. This will relieve the women of household drudgery, give them leisure for self-development and for participation in social and constructive work. During the next quinquennium we expect to complete the development of our polytechnical system, extending the programme of compulsory education to twelve years school attendance instead of seven years as it is at present. We shall provide the schools with the necessary equipment, with plenty of machine tools, laboratories, books and magazines. We expect to merge most of the secondary and higher schools with the industrial and agricultural establishments and build many more schools in the factory plants. We shall greatly improve our Research Institutes and Art Schools and create an extensive system of youth and adult education. There will be an opportunity presented to all to participate in cultural and recreative self-activity. To conduct this magnificent work we plan to enlist five million men and women in our army of educational and cultural workers. We are confident that the rapid development of our huge national resources and the greater efficiency of our industrial workers will make it possible to provide decent support for our educational workers. We want to put them on a par with our technicians and engineers. This does not exclude that a certain percentage of educators will be volunteers contributing their service as

part of their social activity. In short, during the next five years we expect our cultural revolution to triumph.

THE BANKER: In order to make ready for the world revolution! Be frank and admit that this is your ultimate aim.

SOCRATOV: I have never tried to conceal our ultimate aim and I have no objection to discussing it with you.

SEVERAL: Let's have it. Out with it!

THE LEADER: No more discussion to-day. We have one more day in Moscow. We'll adjourn till to-morrow. Sleep peacefully another night in the shadows of the red Kremlin!

DIALOGUE XX

In which the Philosophy of the World Revolution is discussed.

THE LEADER: It has been the desire of the group to conclude these discussions on communist philosophy by taking up the problem of the proletarian world revolution. The doctrine of world revolution seems to be the keystone of communist thought.

THE SENATOR: We want to get to the bottom of this thing. Our public opinion is confused. Some consider it an imminent danger, fear that there is extensive " red " plotting going on in our country to overthrow our government and our democratic institutions. Others consider it a rhetorical phrase, something like the Christian slogan, " conquer the world for Christ," or the eschatological hope of an imminent approach of the millenium. I am a firm believer in the vitality of our system and in its ability to overcome present difficulties. Our people will never be willing to sacrifice individual liberty and ideals for the promises of a communist utopia. Nevertheless, I hold that we must be on guard, that we must not tolerate any insidious alien propaganda. We must root it out before it has had a chance to spread. I came to this country to find out what is behind this much-talked-of Third International and I am glad that Socratov is willing to give us his opinion about it.

THE PROFESSOR: We have had ample opportunity to see that for every phase of life and historic phenomena, communist philosophy has a theoretic basis. If we first make clear the underlying philosophy of the communist theory of world revolution, we will have the theoretical basis for learning

something about the organizational superstructure and finally we can analyze the present world situation to see whether the trends of development justify the fears or the hopes of an imminent world revolution. But let Socratov take up the subject.

SOCRATOV: Our discussion of the dialectics of communism made clear to you that the dialectics of historical evolution presupposes revolution as a part of the historic process. There is continuity and there are breaks. The reason for the breaks is that in the historic process there are present mutually interpenetrating opposite forces. These opposites, gradually increasing in intensity, become conscious of their irreconcilable nature and differences. Finally, a breaking-point is reached which is a revolutionary phenomenon. As a result, the ascending social force becomes dominant. To some degree, you have all witnessed the breaking up of feudal society, as it gave place to the ascending power of the bourgeoisie. In some parts of the world, such as China, and in the recent revolution in Spain, the conflict between remnants of feudalism and the bourgeois social order is quite evident. Even a superficial knowledge of history must convince anyone that bourgeois capitalist domination over feudalism was not attained without a struggle. England under Cromwell led the way against the feudal cavaliers. Then came the American revolution; after that the great French revolution; and by the middle of last century almost every country in Europe had its bourgeois revolution. Since then capitalism has triumphantly encircled the world. While this process has been going on a new social force has been arising simultaneously. The oppressed and exploited proletariat, born of the capitalist system, has step by step grown conscious of its power. Owing to special historical conditions, the proletariat succeeded in capturing power in Russia and is now laying the foundation of a new social order. As England was the firstborn of capitalist nations, Russia, for reasons which we shall point out subsequently, has become the firstborn of the proletarian socialist states and is on her way towards the realization of communism.

Such is the logic of history. Now, the struggle goes on between ascending socialism and declining capitalism. As surely as feudalism gave way to the bourgeois social order, capitalism is now giving way before socialism. The question is not, " shall we have a proletarian world revolution ? " The fact is that we are in the midst of it. Capitalist nations are pregnant with revolution. The question can only be where and when will the next revolutionary outbreak occur ? Human effort may retard it. In some places the revolution may be premature, as it was in Hungary and Bavaria. Nevertheless, the process goes on and it is only a question of time until the old order collapses and the proletarian revolution triumphs.

THE HUMANIST : I suppose you would claim that all you have said just now is good Marxian doctrine. Why then do socialists differ so radically on these questions ? You say revolution. Many are opposed and point to evolutionary reform. How are we to know who is right ?

SOCRATOV : There can be no two opinions on Marx's position. Turn to *The Communist Manifesto*. You find the revolutionary process vividly pictured. If you read it now, you would think it was written yesterday, although in fact eighty-five years have passed since its first publication. Take his first sentence : " A spectre is haunting Europe, the spectre of communism."

THE PROFESSOR : To-day he would have said " the world " instead of Europe.

SOCRATOV : In this lies the chief difference. During the last eight decades the distances separating continents have been gradually disappearing. To-day we are much nearer to Tokio or Washington than Marx was to Berlin when he was writing his *Capital* in London. The economic crises which Marx skillfully detected and recognized as a revolutionary force are now no longer local and national affairs, but are world-wide. They are much deeper too, much more devastating and they last longer.

> " It is sufficient," Marx said, " to mention the commercial crises which occur periodically, threatening more and more the whole of existing bourgeois society. During

> the crises a considerable part not only of the ready products is destroyed, but also of the productive forces which are at the disposal of society. During the crises appear epidemics of superfluous production. Society at once returns for some time into a barbarous condition ; one might think that hunger or destructive war had deprived it of all means of subsistence, industry and trade seem to be destroyed and why ? . . ."

He answers : " Bourgeois relations are too narrow to hold all the wealth created by them."

THE REFORMIST : If Marx could see eighty-five years after he had written this prophecy how we burn grain and cotton and pour thousands of gallons of milk into the rivers in order to stabilize prices while millions are starving, he would probably say, " I told you so, but you only scoffed at me."

SOCRATOV : Listen to this : " How does the bourgeois combat the crises ? " asks Marx. His answer is striking :

> " On the one hand by forced destruction of a mass of productive forces ; on the other by means of conquering new and exploiting more intensively the old markets. Hence by no other means than by preparing more extensive and powerful crises and by lessening the means to counteract them."

Can there be any doubt that Marx and Engels profoundly grasped the laws of the historic process ? Hence we may accept as equally trustworthy the conclusions they drew from the facts, especially when current history fully corroborates them.

THE BANKER : Do you think that we have exhausted all the means of counteracting the destructive tendencies of overproduction and disorganized markets. You forget that our business interests are becoming quite aware of these threatening dangers. We, therefore, begin to organize not only nationally but internationally to avoid competition and regulate production and distribution. The League of Nations which is a clearing house for all these international problems can become quite an important factor in this matter. Do you

really think that we are at our wits' end and ready to surrender to the mercy of the Third International? The decisive battles are still to be fought. We are getting ready for them.

SOCRATOV: We do not expect that you will yield your power without a desperate fight and therefore we do not believe in the pacifist talk of your League and its prophets. The fact that you are armed to the teeth shows that you no longer maintain yourself by the merits of your system but by the force of brute power. The very weapon which you forge as your instrument of oppression will be turned some day to your destruction. Our late Tsar hoped to save his throne by driving millions of workers and peasants into war to fight. These workers and peasants in 1917 refused to fight their fellow workers of other nationalities. They turned their weapons against the Tsar and the bourgeoisie and wiped them out of existence. This may also happen to you, after the next imperialist war. The present scramble for markets in the East and the aggression against China may easily result in such a war. Again I shall refer you to Marx's *Communist Manifesto*:

> "The bourgeoisie has not only forged the weapon which will give it its death blow, but also has borne the people which will turn this weapon against it—the contemporary workers, the proletarians. . . . The bourgeoisie is unfit to rule, because it cannot guarantee its slave even the subsistence due to a slave, it has brought him to a condition when it has to feed him instead of existing at his expense. . . . It creates first of all its own grave-diggers. Its defeat and the victory of the proletariat are equally inevitable."

This was Marx and Engel's conclusion on the inevitability of the proletarian world revolution. Who can say that the forces they pointed to have ceased to be active? On the contrary, from year to year they are accelerated. Our victory in the U.S.S.R. is the beginning of your end.

THE ROTARIAN: Is there really no escape? I cannot believe it. We were told in Europe that Mussolini's system makes

communism quite impossible. Some of us are great admirers of the Italian system. We don't think it necessary to adopt it yet in our country, but before yielding to your dictatorship we surely will embrace Fascism. The same feeling we found in Germany. Its masses rapidly turn to Hitler, the German Fascist leader, rather than to communism.

SOCRATOV: We know that the bourgeoisie finally turns to open dictatorship and Fascism. The mask of democracy by which the workers were fooled is dropped. Behind this mask is the face of the racketeer and the gunman who are to beat the workers into submission. The intensification of the class struggle is quite inevitable. It is one of the evidences that the world revolution is in progress. While Fascist dictatorship may retard progress, it cannot solve the problem, since it rests on the capitalist system in its worst form. The bourgeoisie in its desperate struggle to survive is ready to adapt almost any method. In countries where social democracy has gained a strong foothold it works its way into these parties and tries to bribe their leadership to give it support. Such is the case in Germany. In America it follows the tactics of betting on the best horses. It gets its politicians to organize races between the republicans and the democrats and keeps both organizations on its pay roll. By this sham democracy it is hoped that the organization of real revolutionary parties will be staved off. These manœuvres indicate that the bourgeoisie everywhere in the world cannot rule on its own merits and must revert to fraud or violence to keep itself in power. The programme of the Communist International states:

> "Adapting itself to the alterations of the political situation, the bourgeoisie employs both the method of Fascism and the method of coalition with social democracy. . . . In order to hinder the advancing course of the revolution. . . ."

THE SENATOR: You said you would tell us why it was that Russia and not one of the more advanced capitalist countries led the way in the proletarian revolution. According to Marx

it should have been a country like England or the U.S.A. rather than industrially backward Russia.

SOCRATOV: I answer by a reference to Stalin. On discussing the world-wide significance of Leninism, he asks:

> "Why did Russia become the homeland of Leninism and of the tactics of the proletarian revolution?" . . . "Because Russia was pregnant with revolution, more than any other country and therefore she was in a position because of this to solve her contradictions in a revolutionary way."

Russia was pregnant with a revolution against Tsarism which "had to pass over into a revolution against imperialism, i.e. into a proletarian revolution." According to Lenin imperialism is a special stage of capitalism which is characterized by monopolistic tendencies. It is a parasitic or disintegrating capitalism. Finally it is a dying capitalism. While it was hoped that imperialism would regenerate capitalism, give it permanent monopolistic markets and abundant raw material, it was, says Lenin, "unable to reconstruct capitalism from top to bottom. It was unable to avert competition with the rival imperialist nations and the newly rising native bourgeoisie of colonial and semi-colonial countries. Together with these contradictions and conflicts the periodic crises continued. These facts made Lenin conclude that "imperialism is the eve of the socialist revolution."

THE REFORMIST: Engels in his *Principles of Communism* considered a socialist revolution in one country alone impossible. You, however, seem to have another opinion.

SOCRATOV: Engels reasoned that large industry, by the fact that it creates a world market, so relates all the nations of the earth, particularly the civilized peoples, that each of them depends on the other. Hence he concluded that the communist revolution would not only be national, but would take place simultaneously in all civilized countries. "It is a world revolution," he said, "and therefore will be world-wide." At the time when Engels wrote his *Principles of Communism* he could not of course have had the historical material necessary

to observe the imperialist phase of capitalist development and derive from this material the law of the unequal economic and political development of capitalist countries. The implications which this law presents were fully recognized by Lenin and applied in his theory of the proletarian revolution. Says Lenin: "Unequal economic and political development is a definite law of capitalism. Because of this it is possible to have the victory of socialism at first in a few or even in one separately taken capitalist country." This unequal development has a great revolutionary significance since it accelerates the recurrence of economic crises, extends their area of influence and deepens them. Stalin has rightly observed that because of it, "backward countries in the industrial sense surpass in a more or less short time the advanced countries which cannot but create the premises for enormous imperialist wars and the possibility of a victory of socialism in one country." This was the situation after the late imperialist war which created conditions favourable for the Russian revolution. As a result the existing capitalist crisis is deepened by the fact that, as Stalin says, "Alongside the capitalist system of economy exists a socialist system, which is growing and flourishing and is opposing itself to the capitalist system. By the very fact of its existence it demonstrates the rottenness of capitalism and breaks up its foundations." On the basis of these facts and laws of development we arrive at the conclusion of the possibility of a proletarian revolution in one country. The significance of this victory means that there is a progressive development of the revolution throughout the world. "The Russian example," says Lenin, "shows all countries a few things, and something very essential, about their inevitable and not far distant future."

THE HUMANIST: It seems that Lenin's idea and initiative have had a great deal to do with launching the Communist International, which, after all, is the general staff of the world revolution.

SOCRATOV: Lenin was a prominent member of the Second International. He fought to preserve its integrity as a world

revolutionary force but could not prevent its disintegration, symptoms of which became evident after the experiences of the 1905 revolution. To preserve an active revolutionary force, Lenin founded the Bolshevik faction and agitated for it among the members of the International. In Germany, Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxenbourg gave his ideas undivided support. The World War exposed the impotence of the Second International when its leading members turned to nationalistic chauvinism and voted credits to finance the fratricidal war. They preferred to sustain the imperialist designs of their respective countries, rather than to save the revolutionary integrity of the Second International and use it as a force against the war. Lenin did his utmost to reassemble the Second International to take action against the war. With a number of his followers and the intermediacy of some of the neutral socialist parties, he succeeded in assembling a conference in the Swiss village of Zimmerwald. There in the month of September, 1915, a small number of representatives of the French, German, Russian and Balkan socialist parties met. The British Labour Party was not represented because the British Government would not grant their delegates visas. Also there were represented a number of the neutral countries as the presence of Scandinavian and Swiss delegates demonstrated. The conference recognized the imperialist nature of the war. Lenin led its left wing. He presented a resolution in which he exposed the treasonable activities of the leaders of the socialist parties in the belligerent countries. In this resolution we find such striking statements as " our slogan is not civil peace between the classes, but a civil war . . . the revolutionary social democracy should always point out to the masses that lasting peace and the emancipation of all humanity can be accomplished only through a social revolution." This Zimmerwaldian " left " led by Lenin was the first stone in the foundation of the Third International.

THE PROFESSOR : It was at this conference that Lenin formulated his famous slogan : " Turn the imperialist war into a civil war ? "

SOCRATOV: Quite so! He pressed this same slogan in the following year during the Kiental Conference, which he also promoted. This conference went on record calling for peace without annexation. The treasonable attitude of most of the old leaders compelled Lenin to plan the organization of a new International. His ideas were supported by the German Spartakus group led by Karl Liebknecht. Then came the October revolution. In May, 1918, the Bolsheviks openly broke with the Mensheviks and the socialists of the Second International and took the name "Communist Party of Russia." Their example was followed by the German Spartakus group which became the "Communist Party of Germany." These communist parties were the nucleus of the communist or Third International. In other countries, this disintegration of the old socialist parties was also inevitable. By the end of the year 1918, many communist groups were formed in a number of countries. In January, 1919, the central committee of the Russian communist party, together with the German-Austrian, Hungarian, Polish, Balkan Federation and the Socialist Labour Party of America issued a call for the First Congress of the new revolutionary International. The call declared its purpose to be "to create a fighting organ, which by means of continuous relations and planned direction of the movement should become the nucleus of the Communist International and subject the interests of the movement in the separate countries to the problem of the world revolution." The First Congress opened on March 4th, 1919, in Moscow, and the foundation of the Third of the Communist Internationals was laid.

THE SENATOR: Was this congress sufficiently representative to justify its claim to be International?

SOCRATOV: There were present fifty delegates from twenty-four parties and organizations. All the great European countries were represented with the exception of England and Italy. The presence of so many countries shows that there was dissatisfaction in the socialist movements formerly associated with the Second International. The manifesto which the

congress issued clearly states the revolutionary purpose of the new organization. Among other aims, it declares :

> " In sweeping away the half-heartedness, lies and rottenness of the official socialist parties which have outlived themselves, we communists, united in the Third International, consider ourselves as continuing the heroic efforts of a long line of revolutionary generations from Babeuf to Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxenbourg. . . . The Third International is the International of open mass action, the International of the revolutionary accomplishment of the international cause. . . .
>
> " Socialist criticism has sufficiently castigated the bourgeois world order. The task of the International Communist Party is to overthrow it and to erect in its place the structure of the socialist order. We appeal to men and women workers of all countries to unite under the communist banner, which already is the banner of the first great victory."

THE REFORMIST : I remember the stir that manifesto made in socialist circles. It split many of the great socialist parties, thus weakening the movement and permitting the reactionary elements to reorganize their forces. That was the first result of the organization of the Third International.

SOCRATOV : The split of the world socialist movement was not caused by the Third International. The split was the result of the disintegration which became evident during the war when most of the parties affiliated to the Second International turned nationalistic and became chauvinistically patriotic. In breaking up the Second International the Communist International made it possible to reorganize the genuinely revolutionary elements for action. It may therefore claim to be in the best tradition of the two previous international organizations founded by Marx and his followers. In this lies its great and lasting significance. Its rapid growth testifies to this. In July, 1920, at the meeting of the Second Congress, 218 delegates were present, representing 29 countries. At this conference representatives of colonial and semi-colonial

countries such as China, India, Persia and Turkey appeared for the first time. The Third International erased the colour line—a thing which the Second International could not do. Thus the Third International widened the sphere of its influence and actually became a world-wide revolutionary movement. To protect itself against opportunist groups who may try to get into the movement, the Second Congress drafted the famous twenty-one conditions which each party must accept before being admitted to the Third International. The main condition is that every section of the Communist International must direct its efforts above everything else to accelerate the world revolution. In the manifesto of the Second Congress, we find statements which indicate that together with its destructive revolutionary aims the Communist International was simultaneously laying plans of a constructive order.

> "The disintegrating capitalist world threatens to destroy all human culture. The Communist International presents against it a united struggle of the International proletariat for the destruction of private property in the means of production and for the reconstruction of the national and world economy on the principles of one economic plan which is established and realized by a united society of producers."

A year later at the Third Congress there were 510 delegates from 49 countries. In that year the "Profintern" or the "Red Trade Union International" was also organized, uniting under the political leadership of the Communist International fifteen million workers throughout the world. Thus the revolutionary army increased by leaps and bounds and became a formidable force against the interventionist designs of the imperialist nations which plotted to crush the workers' republic from its very inception.

THE HUMANIST: The origin and development of the Third International is a thrilling story. We know it only by hearsay in our country and I understand now why politicians of every other party are afraid of it. I suppose, however, that when your country gave up hope of an immediate world revolution

and turned its efforts to reconstruction, the ardour of the Third International to stimulate revolutions throughout the world must also have waned.

SOCRATOV : The year 1922 was a time of reaction, the rise of Fascism and White Terror against the revolutionary proletariat. The Fourth Congress which met that year on the occasion of the fifth anniversary of the October revolution had of course to register this fact, but it is not correct to say that the International changed its revolutionary outlook. In the year following, at the Fifth Congress, the manifesto reiterated its revolutionary purpose. It says :

> " The Communist International defines its purpose as the struggle by every means, even with arms in hand for the overthrow of the international bourgeoisie and the creation of an international Soviet Republic as a transitional stage to the complete destruction of the State. The Communist International considers the Soviet power as the historically given form of this dictatorship of the proletariat. . . . The Communist International has for its purpose the liberation of the toilers of the world. In the ranks of the Communist International unite fraternally people of the white, yellow and black races, the toilers of the whole world."

THE BANKER : This statement leaves no doubt of the intent and purpose of this insidious organization. I always thought that we did the right thing in keeping the " Reds " out of our country and by shutting them up in gaol. Now, however, I am convinced that we were too lenient. Any measure to fight them is justified.

SOCRATOV : You must not think that the persecution of revolutionists can prevent a revolution, if conditions otherwise have ripened for it. You could hardly beat the Tsar's régime for cruelty and the persecution of revolutionists. He maintained a whole army of spies and special police to fight them. But it did not save him and his empire. While using every opportunity to accelerate revolutionary development, communists do not think it possible to produce them artificially. Marx and

Engels pointed out the futility of such action. " No social formation," says Marx, " perishes before all its productive forces have developed . . . and new higher productive relations are never established before the material conditions ripen in the bowels of the old society, which are necessary for the existence of the new." Similarly Engels says in his *Principles of Communism* :

> " Communists know very well that all kinds of conspiracies are not only useless but harmful. They know very well that revolutions are not made arbitrarily and by order, but that they everywhere appear as a necessary consequence of circumstances which do not at all depend on the will and direction of separate parties and whole classes. Nevertheless they see that the development of the proletariat in almost all civilized countries is suppressed by force and by this the antagonists of the communists try to call forth revolutions. If for these reasons the oppressed proletariat is finally compelled to turn to revolution, communists will know how to defend the interests of the proletarian by action as they now do in words."

There are always two factors which have to be present before a revolution can be successful—the objective factor, referring to the existing situation in a given country in which the old social order has exhausted itself, as for example in old Russia, and the subjective factor which refers to the preparedness of the revolutionary parties to make use of favourable objective conditions. Many favourable objective opportunities have not been used because the subjective factor was not prepared. It is the purpose of the Third International to prepare the subjective factor in the form of well-disciplined, class-conscious, militant communist parties in all countries. But the objective situation is due to historic forces not controlled by them. Besides, the revolutionary vanguard must know that the masses are with them. This presupposes :

(*a*) A mass revolutionary state of mind among the widest circles of working men and women, of soldiers and the toiling population generally.

(*b*) An acuteness in the economic and political crisis reaching such a degree that the power slips out of the hands of the former government.
(*c*) The ripening of decision in the ranks of the workers and above all in the communist party to begin a decisive and planned struggle for power.
THE REFORMIST: When you first took power in October, 1917, you commenced a ruthless process of expropriation and nationalization which ruined the country economically and brought untold suffering to the people. Do you still adhere to these tactics and think they should be repeated in other countries where a proletarian revolution breaks out?
SOCRATOV: When we began to destroy the bourgeois power, we were generally following the programme suggested by Marx and Engels in *The Communist Manifesto*. It contains ten points which we practically carried through and on some points have gone even further.
THE SENATOR: What are these ten points?
SOCRATOV: (1) Expropriation of land and property and the use of the land rents to cover the expenses of the State.
(2) A high progressive income tax.
(3) Abolition of inheritance rights.
(4) Confiscation of the property of all political immigrants and rebels.
(5) Centralization of credit in the hands of the State by means of a national bank with State capital and exclusive monopoly.
(6) Centralization of transport in the hands of the State.
(7) Increase in the number of State factories and in the implements of production, cultivation and improvement of fields according to a general plan.
(8) Equal labour conscription for all; the founding of industrial armies, particularly for agriculture.
(9) Combination of agriculture with factory work, gradual abolition of the differences between city and villages.
(10) Free social education for all children, abolition of factory work for children in the present form. The merging of education with material production.

Experience compelled us to make some changes in this programme and to add some new provisions. Among these the most important are; annulment of the old State debts, monopoly of foreign trade, exclusive rights of workers' organizations to control printing presses and publish newspapers, etc." The principal points of Marx's programme, together with those just mentioned, are all included in the programme of the Third International.

THE PROFESSOR: Lenin certainly had great confidence in the judgment of Marx and Engels when he carried through his programme. I don't think that any Western socialist would have dared to carry through such rigid measures.

SOCRATOV: Lenin asserted that Bolshevism "created the ideological and tactical basis of the Third International," that it "demonstrated the correct path to salvation from the horrors of war and imperialism," that it "popularized for the whole world the idea of the dictatorship of the proletariat," that it created "a democracy which is infinitely higher and broader than all former democracies of the world," and that it commenced "creative activity of tens of millions of workers and peasants to realize socialism practically." This enormous theoretical revolutionary work was taking place on the basis of mastering not only the experience of revolution in our country, but also in making use of the scientific analysis of the experience of the class struggle in countries of world imperialism and imperialist colonies and semi-colonies. The Comintern has accepted Stalin's definition of Leninism as "Marxism of the epoch of imperialism and the proletarian revolution." Lenin called the tactics of the Bolsheviks, "International tactics." He insisted that "Bolshevism is fit to be an example of tactics for all." From this exposition of the theory of the organization and tactics of the world revolution as it is held by the Third International, you may see that we are not dreamers and utopians, but approach the problem scientifically, with revolutionary ardour and the courage characteristic of the communist movement.

THE SENATOR: Do you realize that in adhering to such a

militant programme of world revolution, you jeopardize the safety of the Soviet Union? I always was a man of peace and favoured the limitation of armaments, but now I realize that there is real danger in this damnable Communist International, the activities of which are backed by the force of the Red Army. In Geneva your delegates talk about complete disarmament. I don't believe for a minute that you really intend to disarm. You want to keep your Red Army to back up the world revolution.

SOCRATOV: Why should we not disarm, if the capitalist nations do the same? Our ultimate aim—the world revolution—will only be advanced by it. We need no army against our workers and peasants. The small remnant of the counter revolutionary bourgeoisie and the "kulak" class are kept well in check by our O.G.P.U. If we could disband our army and navy we would strengthen our industry and the construction programme of socialism generally. We are convinced that the decisive factor which will demonstrate the merits of socialism over capitalism is not the relative strength of armaments, but the ability to produce more efficiently and distribute more equitably. If we did not need to support an army and could quietly pursue our peaceful aims we soon could prove to the world the excellence of our system. We need no army to hold down colonial slaves or threaten rival imperialist nations or suppress revolutions at home. We really mean to disarm, provided other nations will do the same. But we have great doubts that the others will do it so long as they have to oppress the proletariat, and hold down the masses in their colonial possessions. If the capitalists disbanded their armies, their power would collapse overnight. All your peace talk is only a camouflage to pacify the masses who are really anxious for disarmament.

THE PROFESSOR: You are right, Socratov. The plutocrats will never disarm until the revolutionary workers, backed by the Red Army, disarm them. You have talked frankly and clearly. There can be no two opinions as to the ideas which underlie your international movement. The reality of your

aims is not utopian. It is shared by many who are not communist. Thus Professor Bonn asks :

> " Whether the capitalist system has any right to exist if it is unable in the richest country of the world to create a system where millions of people will not be compelled from time to time to live in poverty and depend upon charitable soup kitchens and lodging houses."

There is no human logic which can prove to the masses the reasonableness of the capitalist system which has proved its social absurdity and can maintain itself only with the aid of machine guns and poison gas. Norman Angell says in *Foreign Affairs* :

> " If communism continues to improve its achievements, it will have far greater effect upon the life of the West than anything else and will be the biggest factor since the crucifixion of Christ. Russia does not need to bring disorder to the West, it will be the natural result of the proved bankruptcy of the present system."

Two world systems face each other to-day ; the communist system and the capitalist system. We must make our decision. To which of these will we belong ? There is no other alternative.

THE LEADER : We leave Moscow to-night. I think I am voicing the sentiment of the group when I express to Comrade Socratov our sincerest appreciation for the voluntary service he has rendered us. These talks have been enlightening on many important and vital problems which each of us will have to face in his own way.

ALL (*rise*) : Many thanks ! You have rendered us a great service !

THE HUMANIST (*shaking Socratov's hand heartily*) : You have given me food for thought. I shall ponder many of the things you have said.

THE SENATOR : Good-bye. Don't mind if we were rude in our criticism. We really appreciated your frankness.

THE BANKER (*reaching out his hand*) : I can hardly believe that we are class enemies and that some day you are going to hang

me. I have got so accustomed to you that it seems as if I had known you a long time.

THE REFORMIST: Well, old man! You certainly have been hard after us. I am sorry I must disappoint you. I am still yours for the American *evolution*.

THE ROTARIAN (*presenting a small book*): Mr. Socratov, in this little book many famous men have written their names, two U.S. Presidents, three Governors, many U.S. Senators and Congress men, the Ex-Crown Prince, and the Archbishop of New York. I must have your autograph (*handing Socratov a fountain pen*).

SOCRATOV (*signs his name, smiling*): What an honour!

THE ROTARIAN: Now keep the fountain pen—a souvenir from a rotarian.

SOCRATOV: Many thanks! A very useful article!

(*All leave the room except the Professor, who tarries a moment.*)

THE PROFESSOR (*grasping Socratov's hand*): Shall we meet again? Come and see us some day in America.

SOCRATOV: Some day, when you hoist the Red Flag over the Capitol in Washington!

THE PROFESSOR: Yours for the world revolution!

EPILOGUE

SOME days after the American group had left and I was writing my notes on these discussions, pondering over the implications which communist philosophy has for such ultra-capitalist countries like the U.S.A., I could not but wonder how these men reacted to their experience on returning to their own country. I wrote to my friend the leader and asked him what happened to the Americans. I shall quote extensively from his reply.

" You want to know how the discussions with the communist philosopher have affected the minds of our group. When we returned to the gay atmosphere of Paris and London, all seemed to have forgotten about it. Everybody seemed to be happy to shake off the red dust of Moscow. Except perhaps the Humanist and the Professor who would not join our escapades in the night clubs of Paris. What they did in their rooms I do not know. However, after we got settled in our cabins, homeward bound, everybody seemed to be living through the Moscow experiences once more. We went over our notes, and soon a lively discussion commenced between the members of the party. The Professor was on the extreme left, the Banker and the Senator on the extreme right, the Humanist was very unsettled (he did not seem to have found his bearings), the Reformist was reserved and I might say seemed to be holding a position in the middle of the contending wings. The Rotarian tried to be the angel of reconciliation, making his rounds from one to the other, trying to find some good in all of us. By the time we arrived in New York, it was clear that the Senator and the Banker considered the Professor a Bolshevik. They were irritated by his criticisms of the capitalist system

and his open sympathies with the Bolsheviks. It was quite different with the Reformist. He tried to convince the Senator and the Banker that the only way to avoid a revolution in the U.S.A. is to give the workers a square deal and establish public control limiting the exigencies of capitalism and correcting its grossest evils. He suggested that a research institute be established to study ways and means of reconciliation and co-operation between capital and labour. The Banker was so enthusiastic about this scheme that he promised to finance it with the aid of the National Bankers Association, of which he is a prominent member. He offered the Reformist a position as the Executive of this new institution. The Reformist accepted.

" The Senator is making political capital out of his trip to Soviet Russia. He aims to be Governor of his State. He is touring the country telling the people about the ' Red ' danger which threatens American liberty. He describes picturesquely the satanic devices of the Third International to create world revolution and calls for legislation to prohibit the teaching of Marxism in the universities of his State, together with Darwinism. It is likely that he will be elected on these issues.

" The Humanist is also touring the country at present speaking to college audiences and to intellectuals in general. At times he becomes very enthusiastic about the magnificent Soviet experiences for a better humanity, as he calls it. He agrees with their aims, lauds their social justice, their education and their interest in culture and art, but when he comes to discuss communist tactics he draws the line at violence and eulogizes Gandhi as the terrible meek who expects to conquer his imperialist foes by prayer and passive resistance. The Humanist is really a pathetic figure. He knows enough to appreciate the reality of the communist programme, but is handicapped by his Humanist complex which neutralizes his drive to revolutionary action. His revolutionary ardour resolves itself in eloquent words.

" The Professor was given a reception by his students and

colleagues at which the President of his University was also present. The Professor spoke on the philosophy of the proletarian revolution, in which he gave a masterful exposition of dialectics in their application to the concrete problems of the State, religion, ethics and education. His exposition left no doubt that he believed in the doom of capitalism. He called upon his students and colleagues to study the philosophy of dialectical materialism with all its historical implications. His lecture made a most profound impression. He was asked to give a course of lectures on the principles of dialectical materialism. The President of the University was alarmed, and urged the Professor to refrain from speaking and lecturing on this subject. The President (as we later learned) had already received a letter from the Banker, who was a trustee of the University, complaining that the Professor had ' caught the Bolshevik bug, and was thoroughly unAmerican in his thinking ! ' The Professor refused to be muzzled by the President and the Banker, and continued to lecture on communist philosophy. The Professor was fired. But this did not silence him. He continues to lecture before students' and workers' audiences, speaking enthusiastically of the creative work of the first workers' Soviet Republic. There are some who expect him soon to join the Communist Party.

" The Rotarian is undaunted in his rotarian optimism. He tours the country telling thrilling stories about his visit to the Soviet Union. He speaks with enthusiasm of the discussions he had with a ' real communist philosopher.' He usually closes his speeches by quoting the lines of Pushkin's poem to the Decembrists : ' The heavy-hanging chains will fall, the walls will crumble at a word,' etc. When he was told that the Professor was fired from the university, he said, ' A pitiful misunderstanding ! the Professor is such a fine fellow ! '

" As for myself, I am still the old cynic. It's a lot of fun to see the American plutocrats and their slick, congressional lackeys haunted by the ' Red ' spectre of world revolution. Give my greetings to Socratov."

Shortly afterwards, I met Socratov. I showed him the leader's letter. Running through it he frowned over the Professor's dismissal and remarked : " Well, it's an example of the intensification of the class struggle on the ideological front."

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